Tuesday 9 December 2025

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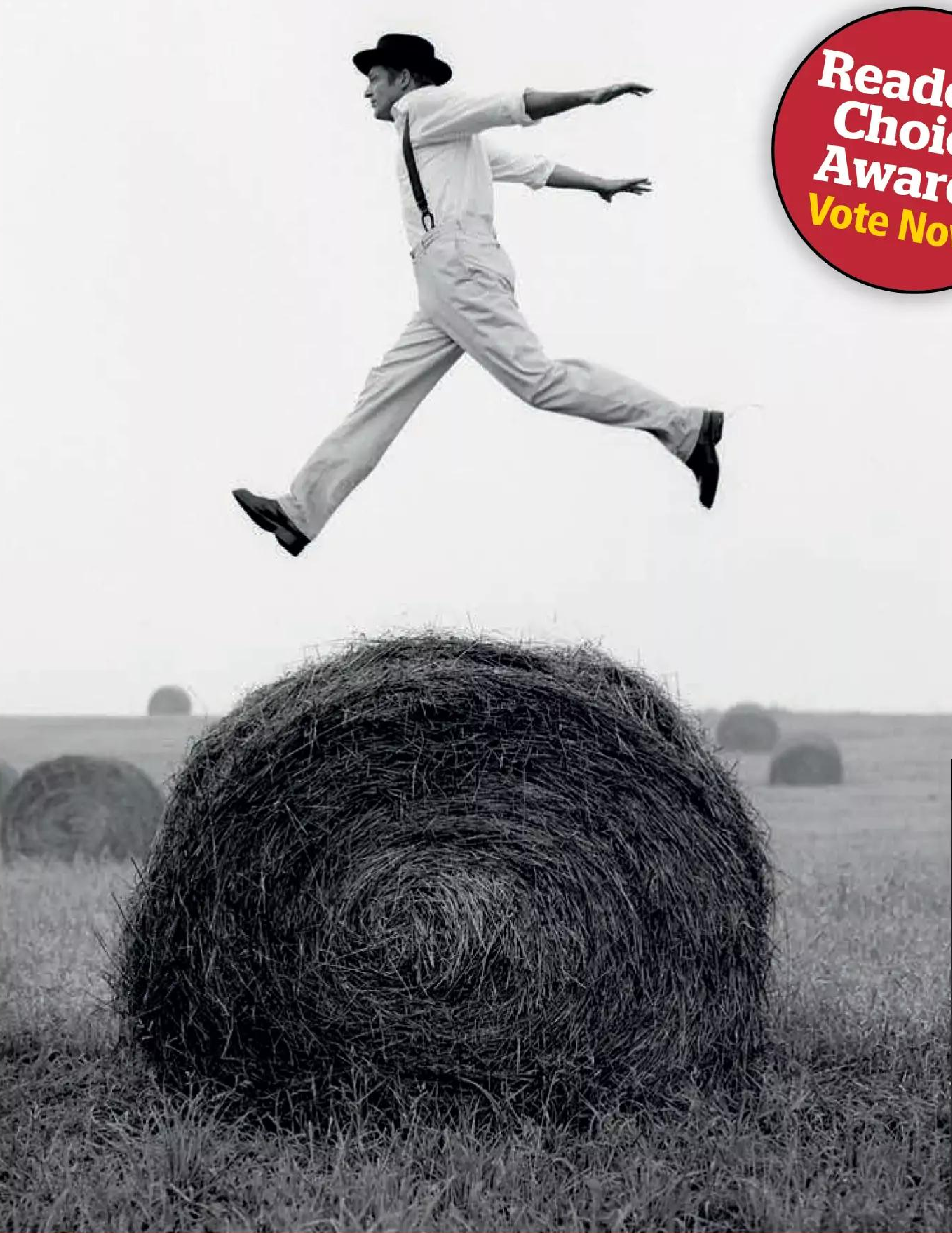
Sony A7 V first look!

Updated enthusiast all-rounder with **faster shooting** and **improved AF**

It's surreal thing

The wonderfully wacky world of **Rodney Smith**



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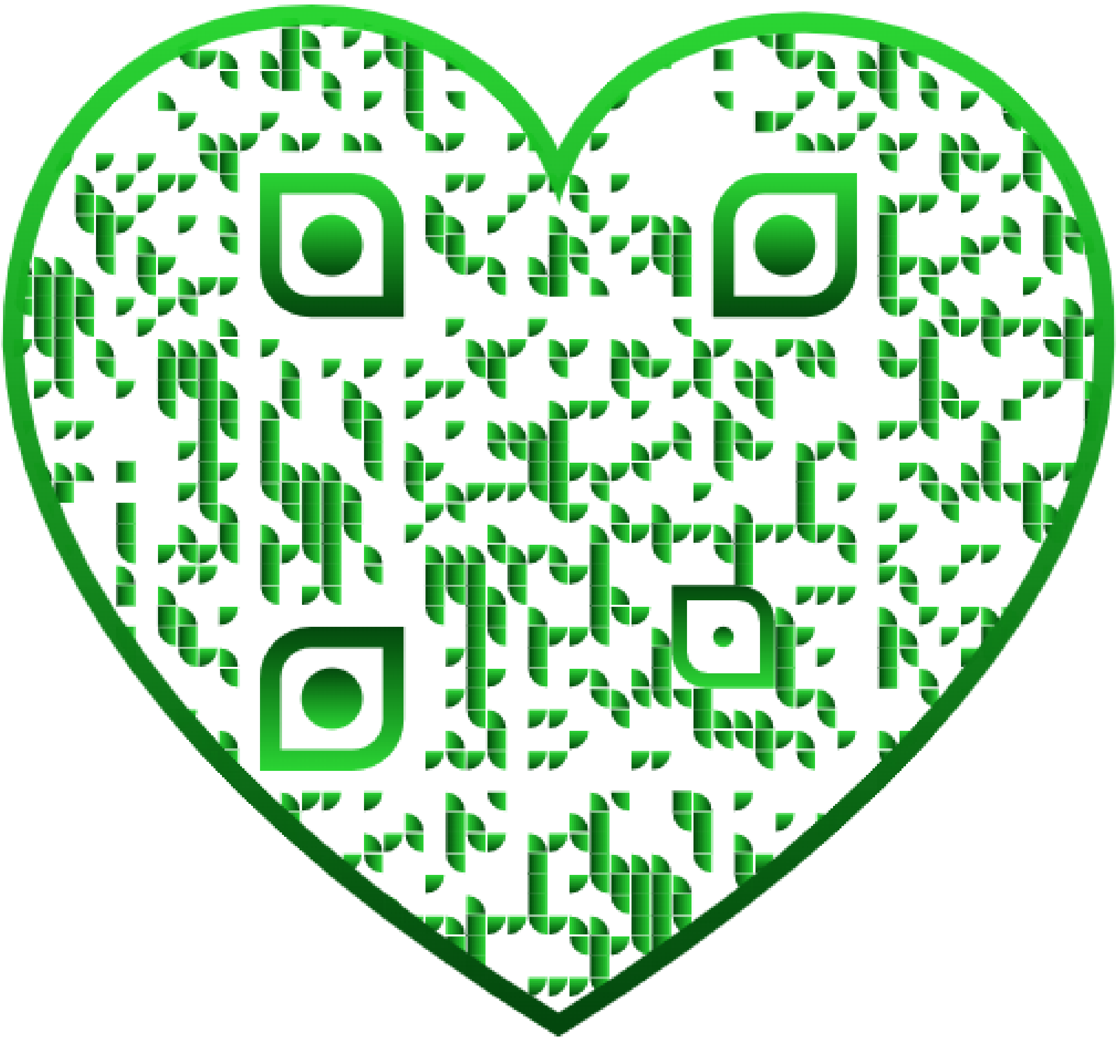
Sony RX1R III Stunning full-frame quality in a tiny body but what's the catch?



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Because we've checked every one.

Time to change gear.

mpb

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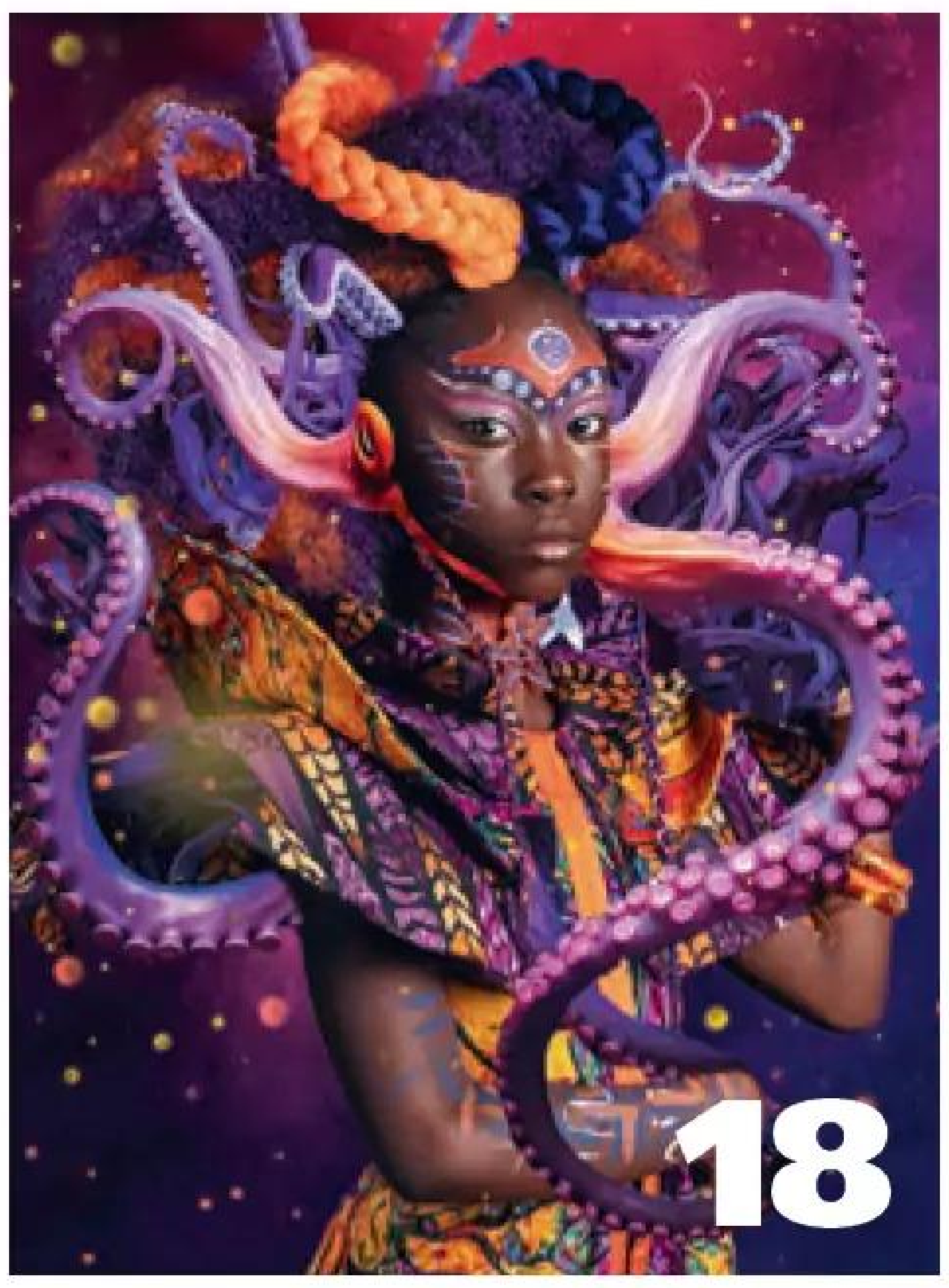
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Welcome

The long-delayed but much-talked-about Sony A7 V is finally here. Andy Westlake takes a first look to see if it was worth the wait. He also tests Sony's flagship full-frame compact RX1R III to find out if it's worth the eye-watering price tag. Our big feature profiles the work of late US fashion photographer Rodney Smith, a name that is not as well known as it deserves to be. We also talk to Atlanta-based couple CreativeSoul about their amazing fantasy child portraiture. Please take a few minutes to vote for your favourite kit, retailers and more in the AP Readers' Choice Awards (page 45). Finally, a ticket for our Festival of Photography in January would make a great Christmas gift for yourself or a friend. See page 38. **Nigel Atherton, Editor**

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COVER PICTURE © RODNEY SMITH. INSET COVER PICTURE, BOTTOM © CREATIVESOUL PHOTOGRAPHY

This week's cover image is by Rodney Smith. Find out more about his work in our feature on page 12

THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

TRACY CALDER
The AP regular talks to the couple behind CreativeSoul Photography about their unique child prortraiture

DAVID CLARK
AP regular David interviews historian and curator Anne Morin about Rodney Smith's surreal photography

ANDY WESTLAKE
Technical Editor
Andy conducts our First Look this week, and tests the Sony RX1R III full-frame compact

ANGELA NICHOLSON
AP's former technical editor reviews Canon's hybrid prime, the RF 85mm F1.4L

AILSA MCWHINNIE
Our APOY project manager on how you can enter Round Nine, Urban Life, of APOY 2025

JESSICA MILLER
Dep Online Editor
The manager of AP's social media channels picks top reader shots in It's good to share

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Sony Alpha A7 V

Sony has upped the ante again with its latest enthusiast-focused model, promising significant performance boosts. **Andy Westlake** takes a first look

At a glance

£2799 body only

- 33MP partially stacked full-frame sensor
- ISO 100-51,200 (standard)
- Up to 30fps shooting
- 4K 60p video (120p with Super-35 crop)
- 3.2in, 2.1m-dot, 4-axis multi-angle LCD
- 3.68m-dot, 0.78x viewfinder

SONY
α 7
FE 4/20-70 G
G
⌀72
0.3m/0.99ft-0.25m/0.82ft

New sensor
While the 33MP resolution remains unchanged, the A7 V now has a partially stacked sensor.

New processor
Sony has integrated AI subject recognition into the Bionz XR2 processor, rather than needing a separate chip.

Ports
The A7 V now has a full-size HDMI connector and two USB-C: one for power, the other for data.

4-way LCD
The rear screen includes both up-down tilting and side-hinged articulation mechanisms.

FE 4/20-70 G
SONY

The top layout is the same as before

C3
MENU
C1
AF-ON
AEL
Main > Main
> Image Quality Settings
3/62
1/50
F4.0
ISO 100
J-FINE 33M
558
AWB
Page
Close
Fn
C4

Rear controls are identical to the A7 IV, but the new model gains a 4-axis articulated screen

Sony's new Alpha A7 V is an SLR-shaped full-frame mirrorless camera, and the latest iteration of the firm's 'basic' line that's designed for enthusiast photographers. It looks almost identical to its predecessor, the A7 IV from 2021, and offers the same 33MP resolution. Don't be fooled into thinking that it's only a minor upgrade, though, as both the sensor and image processor are brand new. This brings a range of improvements, including faster shooting and enhanced autofocus.

Looking first at the sensor, this now employs a partially stacked design. We've seen this architecture before in the 24MP sensor used by the Panasonic Lumix S1II and Nikon Z6III. Its big advantage is that it brings faster readout speeds which underpin the camera's increased performance, but without the same expense as a fully-stacked sensor.

As before, the sensitivity range covers ISO 100-51,200 as standard, with extended ISO 50-204,800 options also available. Continuous shooting is available at up to 10 frames per second, but new on the A7 V is the ability to hike this to 30fps by engaging the electronic shutter. Pre-capture is also available, with the camera able to buffer up to a second's-worth of frames before the shutter is fully pressed.

One area where the A7 IV was looking distinctly long in the tooth was autofocus. However, the A7 V's new Bionz XR2 processor now has built-in AI that enables a full set of subject

I got to try out the Sony A7 V before its official launch

recognition options, without the need for the co-processor used by previous Sony models. As a result, the camera can detect humans, animals, birds, insects, cars, trains, and airplanes. It also includes an auto-selection mode.

There's a significant boost in video spec, too, with 4K recording available at 60 frames per second using the full sensor width, and at 120fps with a 1.5x crop. Sony is promising longer recording times without overheating, and the internal microphones have been upgraded for clearer sound. However, some users may be disappointed that there's no 3:2 open gate recording option.

Naturally the A7 V includes all the other improvements that Sony has introduced over the past four years. In-body stabilisation is now rated to give 7.5 stops of shake reduction in the centre of the frame, and 6.5 stops at the periphery. There are a couple more AF area sizes, and the onscreen interface rotates for portrait format shooting. Swiping in from either side of the screen brings up touch buttons for commonly changed settings. Auto white balance has been improved too, based on Deep Learning technology.

Sony has also included its 'Continuous Shooting Speed Boost' mode that temporarily switches up the speed by pressing a function button. But it has a quirk, in that it can't change from using the mechanical shutter to the electronic shutter in the middle of a burst. Instead, the photographer has to lift off the shutter button and start again, which is sure to leave a lot of users wondering whether it actually works.

Tried-and-tested design

Physically, the A7 V looks near identical to the IV, with the same body design and all the same controls. It's essentially the same size too, at 131 x 70 x 82mm, if a little heavier at just shy of 700g. To anyone who's used a recent Sony A7 model, it'll be very familiar.

One obvious change is on the back, though, where the screen now adopts Sony's '4-axis' articulation. This means it can both tilt up and down behind the camera, and swing out to one side and then twist around to face in any direction. That delivers greater versatility compared to Canon and Nikon's side-hinged units.

The viewfinder maintains the same specs as before, with 3.68m-dots and 0.78x magnification, and a 120fps refresh rate. That's not as huge as on the firm's top-end models, but it's still very good indeed. It's notably bright and easy to see, even on a sunny day.

First impressions

Back when it was launched, the A7 IV was class-leading in many respects. But since then, it's been surpassed in many ways by the Nikon Z6III and the recent Canon EOS R6 Mark III. After using the A7 V for a few days before its launch, though, it looks as though Sony may well have jostled its way right back to the front of the pack. The partially stacked sensor gives the same kind of snappy, responsive feel as the Z6III, while the 33MP resolution is a match for the R6 III. Look out for our full review in the new year.

Updated kit zoom

Sony has also updated its entry-level full-frame kit zoom, with the FE 28-70mm F3.5-5.6 OSS II gaining the ability to track focus while shooting still or video at 120 frames per second. It also now supports the focus breathing compensation function found on recent Sony cameras, that suppresses any change in angle of view while changing the focus during video recording. It's fractionally lighter than its processor, too, at 293g.

Elsewhere, though, everything remains the same. Optically it employs 9 elements in 8 groups, including 3 aspherical elements and 1 made of ED glass to maximise sharpness. Meanwhile, the aperture diaphragm has 7 curved blades. The minimum focus distance ranges from 30-45cm through the zoom range, delivering 0.19x magnification.

Physically the lens measures 72.5mm in diameter by 83mm in length, with a dust and moisture resistant design. It accepts 55mm filters and optical stabilisation is built in, too. The lens is due on sale in February for £429.

The new 28-70mm zoom is only a minor update

Honor toughens up

Leading Android smartphone maker Honor has released early details of its new budget smartphone, the Magic8 Lite, set to arrive in the UK early next year. While camera details are yet to be confirmed, it sounds a very tough phone for everyday photography – said to be able to withstand rinsing, splashing and even immersion in boiling water for up to 10 seconds; it's claimed the Magic8 Lite can also survive being dropped from a 2.5 metre height. Battery life has been beefed up too, and the new phone comes with a 7500mAh cell that can last up to three days (the previous model, the Magic7 Lite, had a 6600mAh battery).

The Honor Magic8 Lite will be available in three colours – Forest Green, Midnight Black and Reddish Brown – the latter coupled with gold accents around the camera area on the rear.

HONOR Magic8 Lite
2.5m drop resistant

The new Honor budget phone is a tough customer

International landscape winners named

J FRITZ Rumpf from the USA has been named winner of the International Landscape Photographer of the Year 2025 competition. In second place came Karol Nienartowicz from Poland, while another US photographer, Joyce Bealer, came in third. Meanwhile, Torsten Pull from the UK was named a Special Winner in the Black and White category.

There is a $12,500 total cash purse: for the best Photograph of the Year (single shot, 1st, 2nd, 3rd), the best Photographer of the Year (portfolio of four photographs, 1st, 2nd, 3rd), and five special subject awards. All 11 winners also receive a printed copy of the annual Awards book.

This year's Landscape Photographer of the Year competition attracted 3,601 entries from all over the world, and the judging panel was headed up by veteran US documentary photographer David Burnett, a former *Life* magazine regular and founder of Contact Press Images.

You can see all the winners of International Landscape Photographer of the Year at bit.ly/landscapepoty25

THE INTERNATIONAL
LANDSCAPE
PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR
J. Fritz Rumpf USA
1st Place
2025 International Landscape Photographer of the Year

J Fritz Rumpf's winning portfolio

Animal
Bird
Flamingo
Nature
Body of Water

The new AI-powered keywords in action

New photo-editing software for MacOS

ACD Systems has announced the release of ACDSee Photo Studio for Mac 26, the latest version of its photo management and editing software for computers running MacOS.

The new software blends AI with file-management and non-destructive editing tools to help photographers simplify photo management and speed up their workflow. Key features include AI Denoise, which automatically removes unwanted noise while preserving image detail; AI Presets, which analyses both individual and groups of images (including raw) and applies non-destructive adjustments; the ability to search your image library with intutitive AI keywords; and the option to organise images by camera, file type, date of capture and more. It costs £69.95.

Stylish pouch from Billingham

BILLINGHAM has announced the availability of the Capsule 1, a stylish pouch with a wide 'doctors-bag' opening that is designed to fit inside your everyday camera bag. The Capsule 1 comes with three-layer waterproof material and 5mm foam to protect small to medium-sized cameras and lenses, along with two internal mesh pockets for memory cards, cables and similar items.

'Whether used on its own or placed inside your everyday bag, the Capsule 1 pouch delivers the perfect balance of protection, practicality, and timeless style,' said Billingham.

The Capsule 1 is available in four colours, sage, black, burgundy and khaki, and costs £125.

See www.billingham.co.uk

The Capsule 1 is priced at £125

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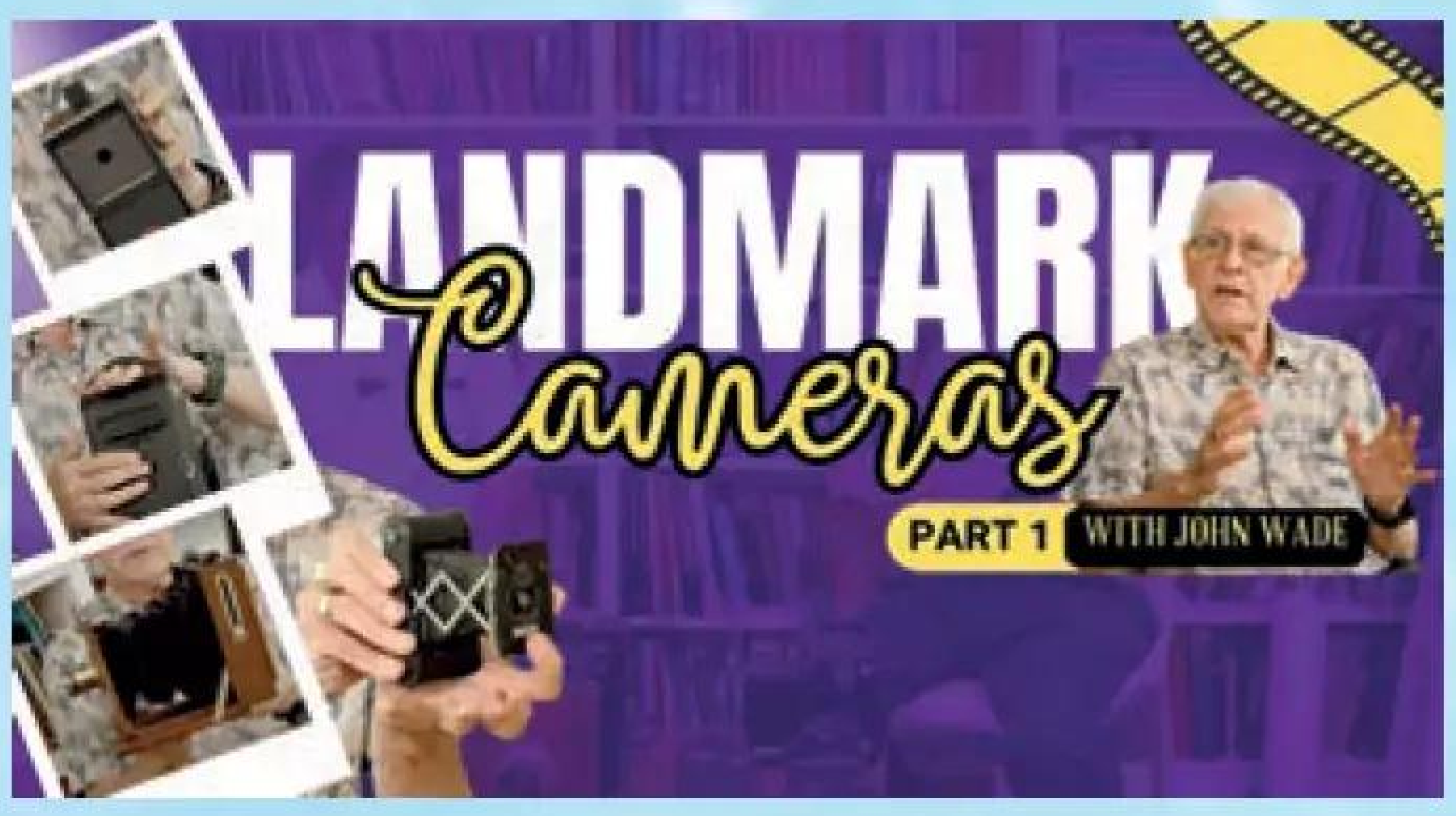
SOME RECENT VIDEOS
J. Fritz Rumpf's winning portfolio

60s Classic cameras
WITH JOHN WADE
Groovy


LANDMARK Cameras
PART 1
WITH JOHN WADE

ADAPTIVE PRESETS
LrC

KODAK EKTAR H35N
VS
PENTAX 17
STAR FILTER
HALF FRAME

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D500
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D780
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Z fc
NIKKOR
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NIKKOR Z 40mm
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ALL IMAGES © CONSTANCE JAEGGI

Escaramuza

by Constance Jaeggi: Poetry by Angelina Sáenz and Ire’ne Lara Silva

£50, GOST Publishing, Hardback, 128 pages, ISBN: 9781915423962

In *Escaramuza*, Swiss photographer Constance Jaeggi celebrates the fearless women of Mexico’s all-female rodeo, capturing a culture balancing beauty, power and belonging, says Peter Dench

They ride with precision, poise and peril. Eight women, side-saddle, skirts flaring, weaving across an arena in synchronised chaos. It’s ballet on horseback. This is escaramuza, the all-female discipline of charrería, Mexico’s national sport. Traditionally a male preserve of cattle ranching and roping, escaramuza was born as a space for women to perform, compete and reclaim the arena, both literally and symbolically.

Swiss photographer Constance Jaeggi, a competitive rider herself, travelled across the United States to document these teams. From Arizona to Washington she captures women whose stories cross borders as deftly as their horses cross paths. The resulting book, *Escaramuza*, blends her portraits with newly commissioned poetry by Angelina Sáenz and Ire’ne Lara Silva. It gives the project a lyrical counterpoint that deepens its sense of identity, movement and belonging.

Jaeggi admits she came for the spectacle of colour, control and danger but stayed for the conversations. Her subjects often spoke of living between cultures: not ‘Mexican enough’ in Mexico, not ‘American enough’ at home. Through her photographs, the women stare directly back. They are confident, defiant and grounded in the dust of the land.

For Jaeggi, photographing escaramuza became an act of reclamation. She shoots her subjects within landscapes long coded as white and male, restaging the American West through female eyes. The portraits are more than documentation, they challenge tradition, expectation and the idea of who gets to belong in the saddle.

Escaramuza is as much about community as the competition. Jaeggi follows her riders as they train, haul trailers across state lines, sew dresses, feed horses and build friendships around shared purpose. The accompanying poems thread through these images like reins. The viewer is steered toward themes of ancestry, resilience and grace.

This 128-page volume is handsomely produced, as we’ve come to expect from GOST. It stands as a testament to cultural endurance and reinvention. In a world obsessed with speed, *Escaramuza* reminds us of the balance between history and progress, beauty and strength, control and freedom.

In every frame, Jaeggi’s message is clear: the women of escaramuza are riding into history by rewriting the story of the West.

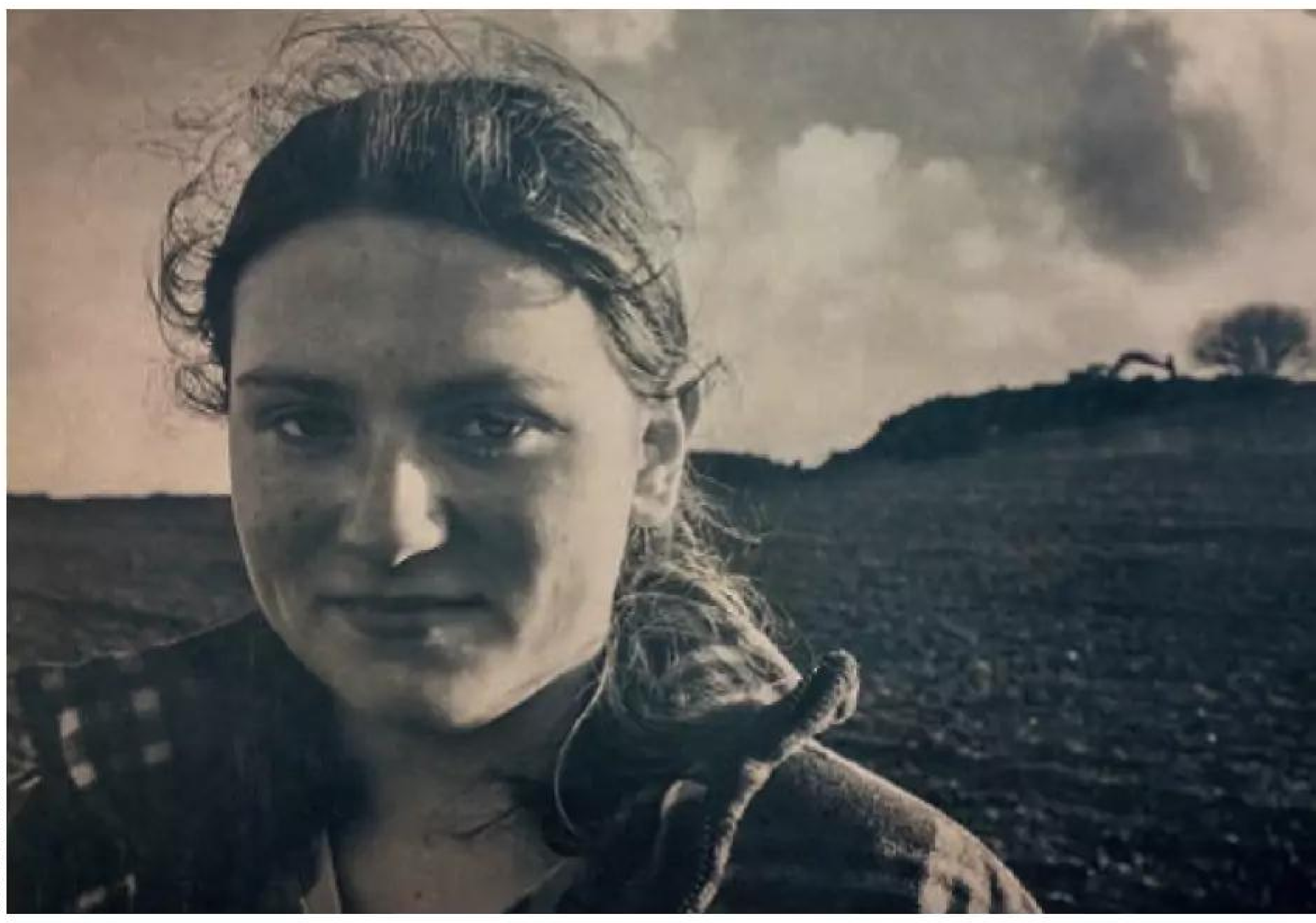
Far left: Emma, Stephanie and Lizeth, Selección de Oregon Mulino, Oregon, 2024

Left: Marisol, Melanie, Nathaly and Stacy, Escaramuza Charra Azteca Manor, Texas, 2023

Below: Analuisa and Jessica, Escaramuza Las Norteñas Canutillo, Texas, 2024

Books & exhibitions

The latest and best books and exhibitions from the world of photography



© KATE BELLIS

Fran, 13 years old, Lydgate Farm, Aldwark. Hand-printed cyanotype toned using oak galls collected from Wirksworth Moor and Longcliffe limestone dust (calcium carbonate), the rock under Fran's feet.

EarthBound

On display in Derby, UK, at the Museum of Making until 18 January 2026

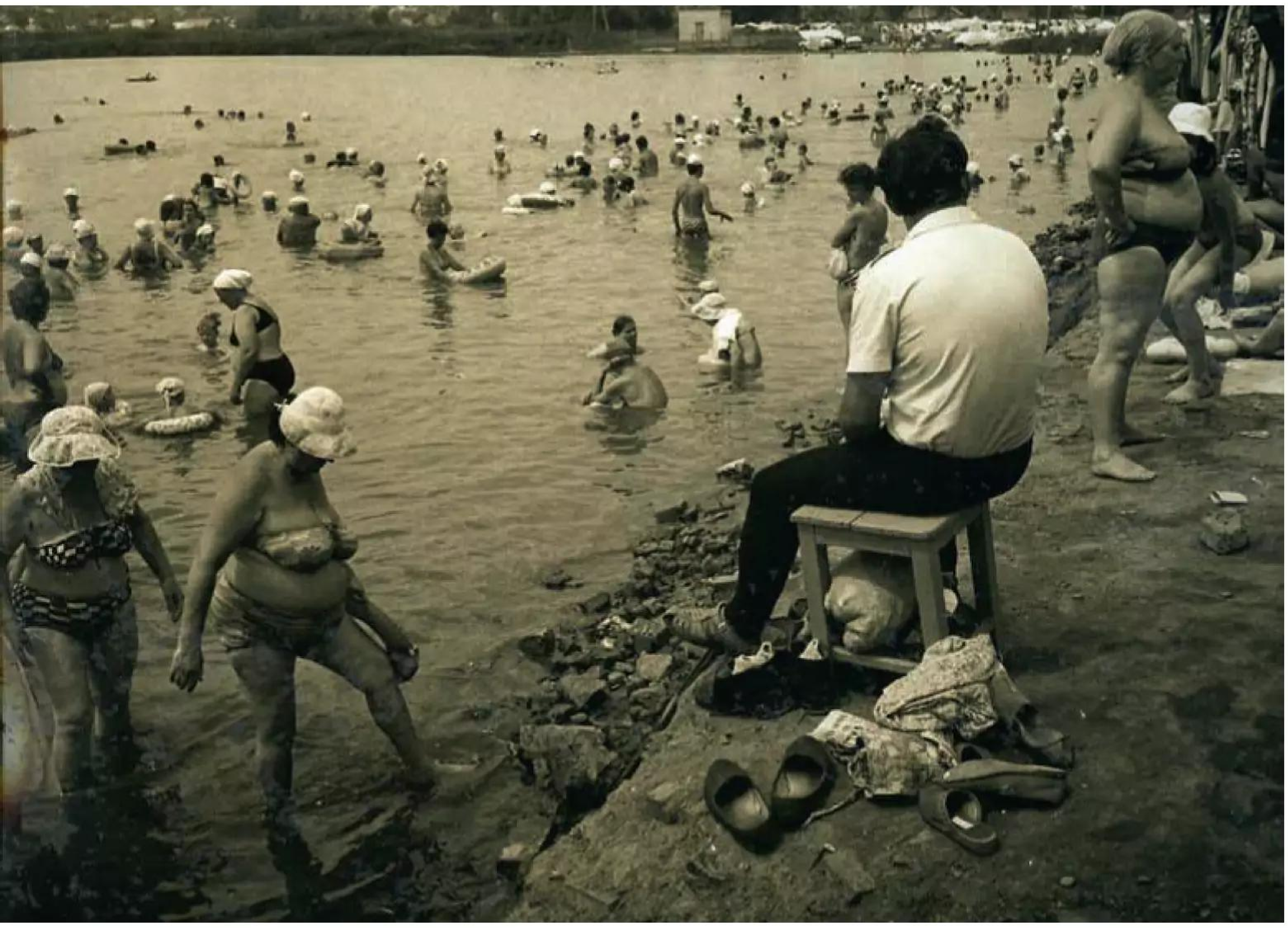
The Museum of Making in Derby has always celebrated human ingenuity: the stuff we build, forge and fabricate. But its exhibition, EarthBound, flips that perspective, asking what happens when nature reclaims the stage.

Photographer Kate Bellis conceived the project from a lifelong curiosity that began in the Devon fields of her childhood. As she recalls, she would lie still among young bullocks, feeling their breath and listening to the scratch of ants and the hum of insects. 'I'd wonder at my connection to all this miraculous stuff going on around me and I'm still wondering now,' she says. That sense of closeness and wonder fuels EarthBound.

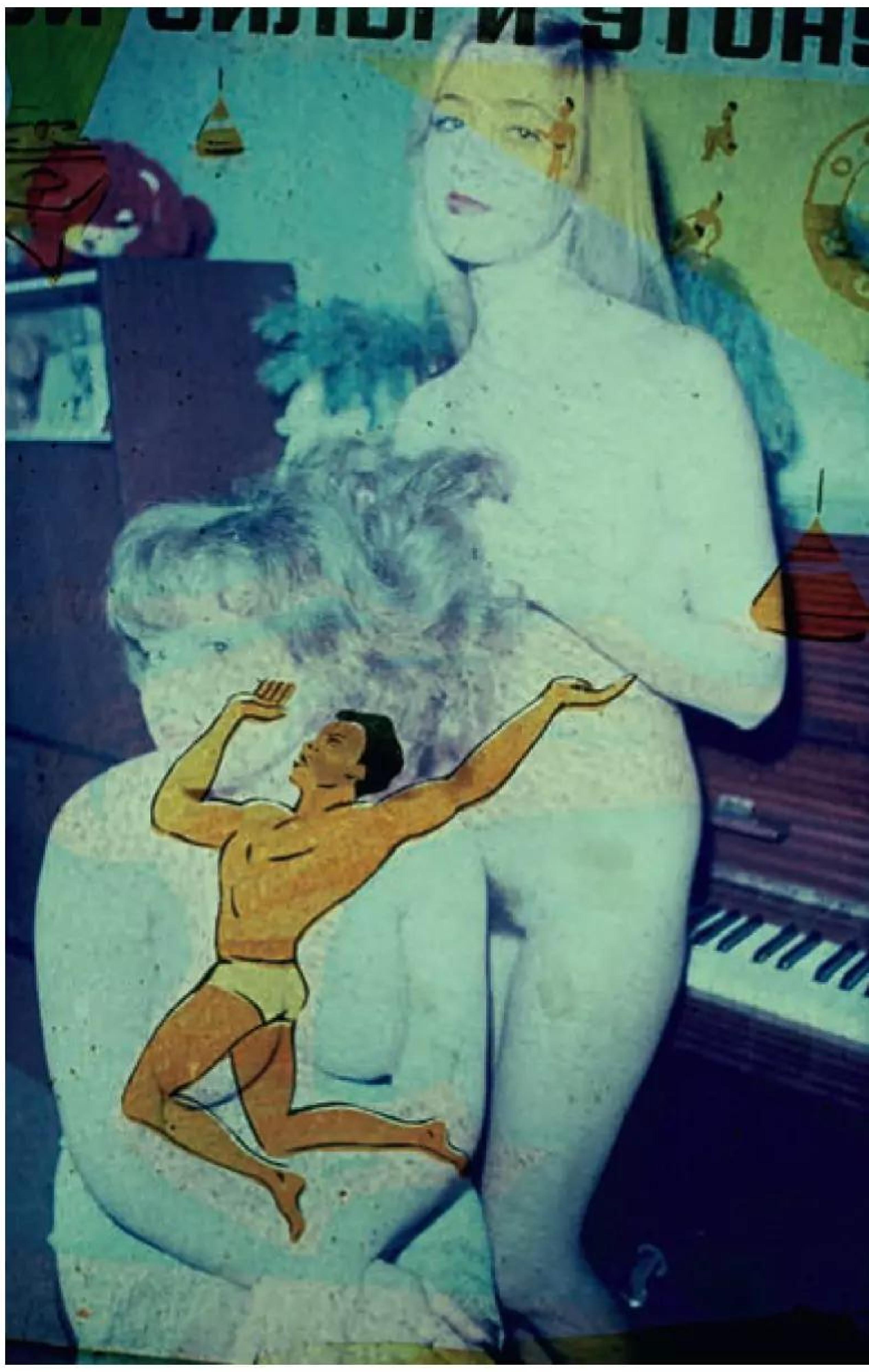
Bringing together the work of 14 artists, the exhibition explores the fragile relationship between people and the planet. Bellis's cyanotypes of Derbyshire people form its emotional core and printed with materials gathered from the land: limestone dust, oak galls, botanicals. It turns portraiture into quiet collaboration between subject and soil.

Meanwhile, Alex Hyde's macro photography zooms in on the overlooked: beetles, tardigrades and other tiny survivors that extend the definition of portraiture and resilience.

Supported by Canon, the Institute of Quarrying and Arts Council England, EarthBound grounds big environmental ideas in the tactile and local. It reconnects Derby to its own geology and to the simple truth Bellis discovered lying in a Devon field: that we are all, quite literally, earthbound.



Sepia photograph of a people frolicking in a body of water. Women and men can be seen in bathing suits aside from one man who is captured sitting at the edge of the bank on a stool in a white shirt and black trousers.



Colour photograph of a naked woman leaning on a piano while holding the hair of another woman sitting down. An animated image of a partially-naked muscular man obscures the woman sitting down.

Boris Mikhailov: Ukrainian Diary

The Photographers' Gallery, London, UK, until 22 February 2026

If Boris Mikhailov hadn't picked up a camera, he'd probably have found another way to cause trouble. The Ukrainian artist, born in Kharkiv in 1938, has spent more than half a century poking, prodding and parodying the systems around him. His first act of rebellion? Developing nude photos of his wife in a Soviet factory darkroom. This promptly earned himself a visit from the KGB and a new career.

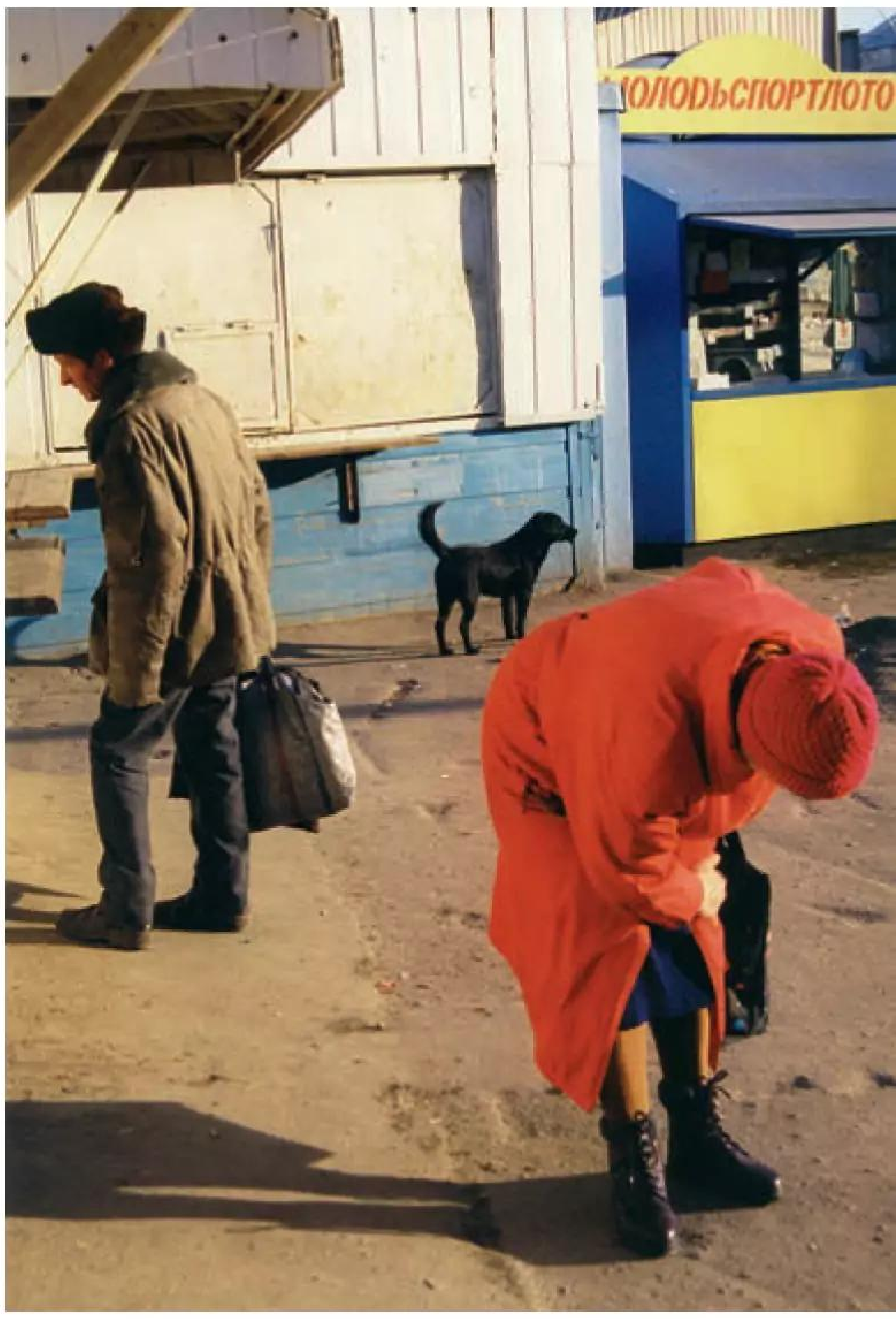
Ukrainian Diary, his first major UK retrospective, sprawls across The Photographers' Gallery like an unruly scrapbook of resistance. It gathers more than 20 of his most important series, from the accidental double exposures of Yesterday's Sandwich to the raw, unsettling Case History and the garish Luriki portraits that thumb their nose at Soviet aesthetics.

Mikhailov's genius lies in his refusal to behave. His 'bad photography' of scratched negatives, off colours and overexposures was a deliberate two-finger salute to official taste. 'Lousy photography for a lousy reality,' he once said, and the description still fits. Across decades of chaos, collapse and renewal, his lens has remained defiantly human, capturing the absurdities and tragedies of life in Ukraine with equal measure.

Humour and horror often share the same frame. A self-portrait mocking Soviet machismo sits beside bleak depictions of post-Soviet poverty. Red obsessively tracks the colour that once defined a nation, exposing the omnipresence of ideology in even the smallest details. There's tenderness here too, a kind of punk poetry that transforms failure and decay into something defiantly alive.

Now in his eighties, dividing his time between Berlin and Kharkiv, Mikhailov remains a trickster, still baiting authority and expectation. Ukrainian Diary feels both retrospective and warning. A reminder that photography, in the right mischievous hands, can still rattle cages and rewrite history's margins.

ALL IMAGES © BORIS MIKHAILOV



Colour photograph of an unidentifiable person wearing a red coat and red hat crouching down and a man wearing a winter coat and hat holding luggage. A black dog can be seen at the back of the photo.

Clockwise from left:

1dd Nottingham

3aa Stonehenge

12 Manchester

7bb Skegness

Click! Land's End to John o'Groats

by Chris Porsz

RRP £21, Hardback, 352 pages, ISBN: 9781036930875

Chris Porsz doesn't do photography by halves. The paramedic-turned-photographer has once again flung himself headlong into a project. This time he retraces a journey he first made in 1974 with his late wife, Lesley. From Land's End to John o'Groats (with a curious detour via Belfast), his map-reading seems as wayward as his humour.

Click! is part travelogue and part tribute. Testament to a man who persistently sees life through a lens of mischief and wonder. The book gathers old favourites alongside new work shot during his 874-mile odyssey. Porsz took thousands of pictures and deleted a lot of them. (A discipline some photographers might want to try!) What is distilled is a joyous, funny and frequently touching cross-section of Britain. There are hen parties, buskers, barbers and the gloriously eccentric British citizens who brighten up our dour pavements.

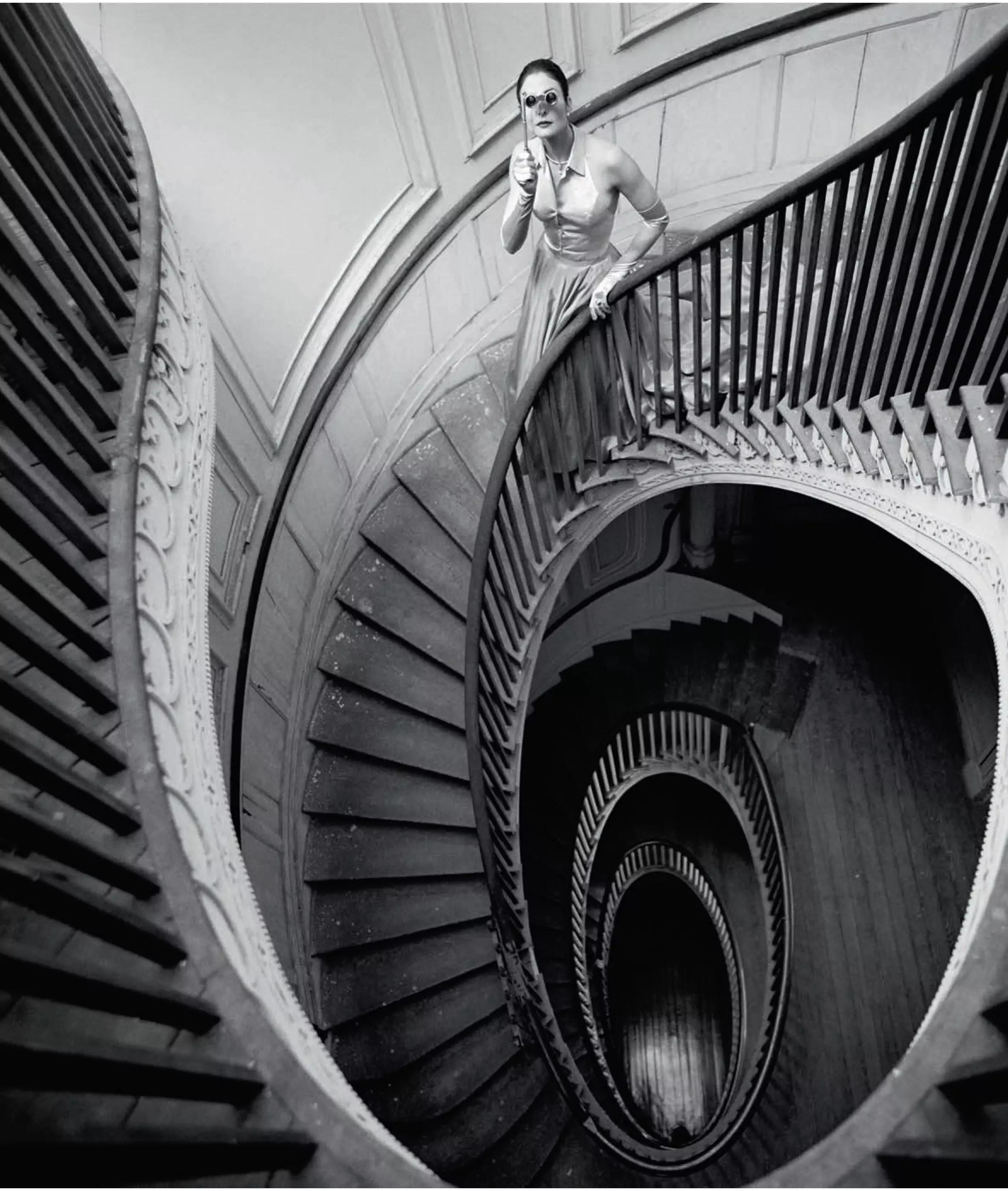
Porsz has always favoured the theatrical over the discreet. His subjects often clock his camera and sometimes play up to it. That's maybe part of the charm. He coaxes moments rather than steals them. His long-running Reunions series, which brought back together people he'd photographed decades earlier, proved he's as interested in connection as composition.

There's poignancy here too. The journey is dedicated to Lesley, and beneath the banter there's a sense of urgency. Porsz is a man aware that time, like a fleeting photograph, can't be paused. His energy crackles through every page. He's as likely to be nearly flattened by a man dressed as a willy as he is to frame the decisive moment.

How long he'll keep at it is anyone's guess but if *Click!* turns out to be a closing chapter, it's a fitting finale. It's a book full of humour, humanity and heart. Still, I suspect he'll soon be back out there, chasing another laugh, another look, another Click!

Manchester Piccadilly

ALL IMAGES © CHRIS PORSZ



A vision for fashion

Rodney Smith's photography was elegant, surreal and meticulously crafted. His often-overlooked work deserves greater acclaim, photographic historian and curator Anne Morin tells **David Clark**

If one thinks of major fashion photographers of the 1980s and '90s, leading figures such as Annie Leibovitz, Helmut Newton, Nick Knight and others come to mind. Rodney Smith may not, despite his distinctively surreal, whimsical work for high-profile brands such as Ralph Lauren and magazines including the *New York Times* and *Vanity Fair*.

Why isn't he more famous? 'I think history makes many mistakes,' answers Anne Morin, editor and curator of a new Rodney Smith career retrospective book and exhibition. 'Smith wasn't just a fashion photographer commissioned by big brands, he was a really visionary man, an artist who put photography at the service of his vision. He has been really undervalued and I think the new book and exhibitions put him in the place he deserves to be.

'His photography is not just a simple wink towards the surreal world – behind it is a huge ability in terms of taking pictures. Everything is real, there's nothing retouched, and however he makes you believe the illusion, he never lies. He uses photography as an artist and there's a huge moral integrity in terms of the way he uses it.'

Smith's work is often described as dreamlike and

Left: Caroline at the Top of Circular Staircase Charleston, South Carolina 2000

Right: James in Innertube with Duck Lake Placid, New York 2006

ALL PICTURES © RODNEY SMITH

timeless. It also undoubtedly includes an element of playfulness and humour. Influenced by artists such as René Magritte, writers including Lewis Carroll and filmmakers such as Alfred Hitchcock, his images have a slightly unreal appearance and people are shown in all kinds of unusual, mysterious and intriguing situations. His elegant, well-dressed models may be shown jumping over a hay bale, doing a cartwheel on a sea wall or almost entirely covered by a giant top hat. Equally they may be shown standing on a boat in a flooded forest or posing like the hands on a giant clock.

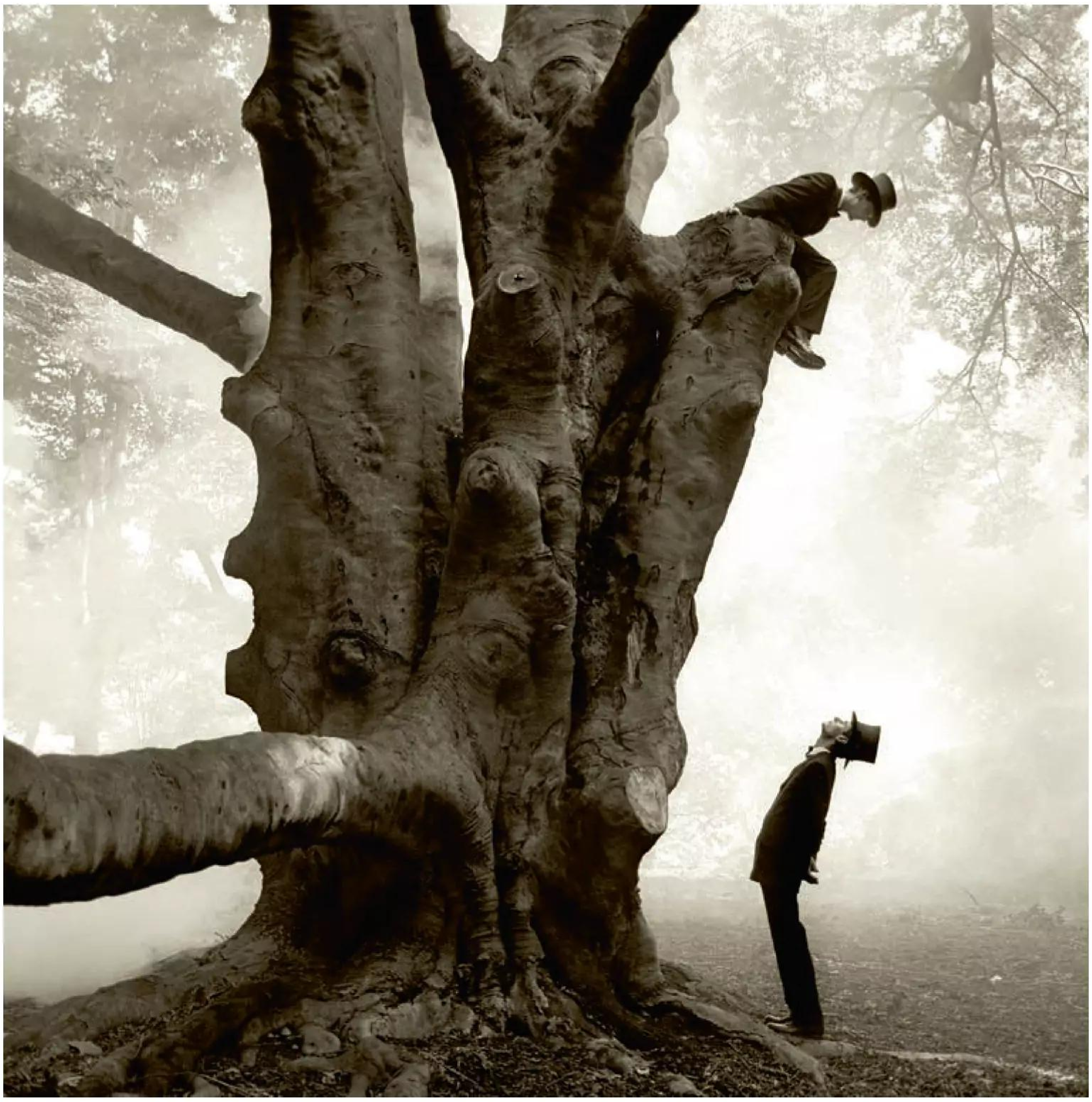
Smith himself said of his work, 'Today, a great deal of Western culture seems rooted in remoteness, anger, alienation, and squalor. I want people to see the beauty and whimsy in life, not its ugliness. I feel the need to reach out for its soul, its depth, and its underlying beauty. I represent a world that is possible if people act their best. It's a world that's slightly beyond reach, beyond everyday experience, but it's definitely not impossible.'

Life and career

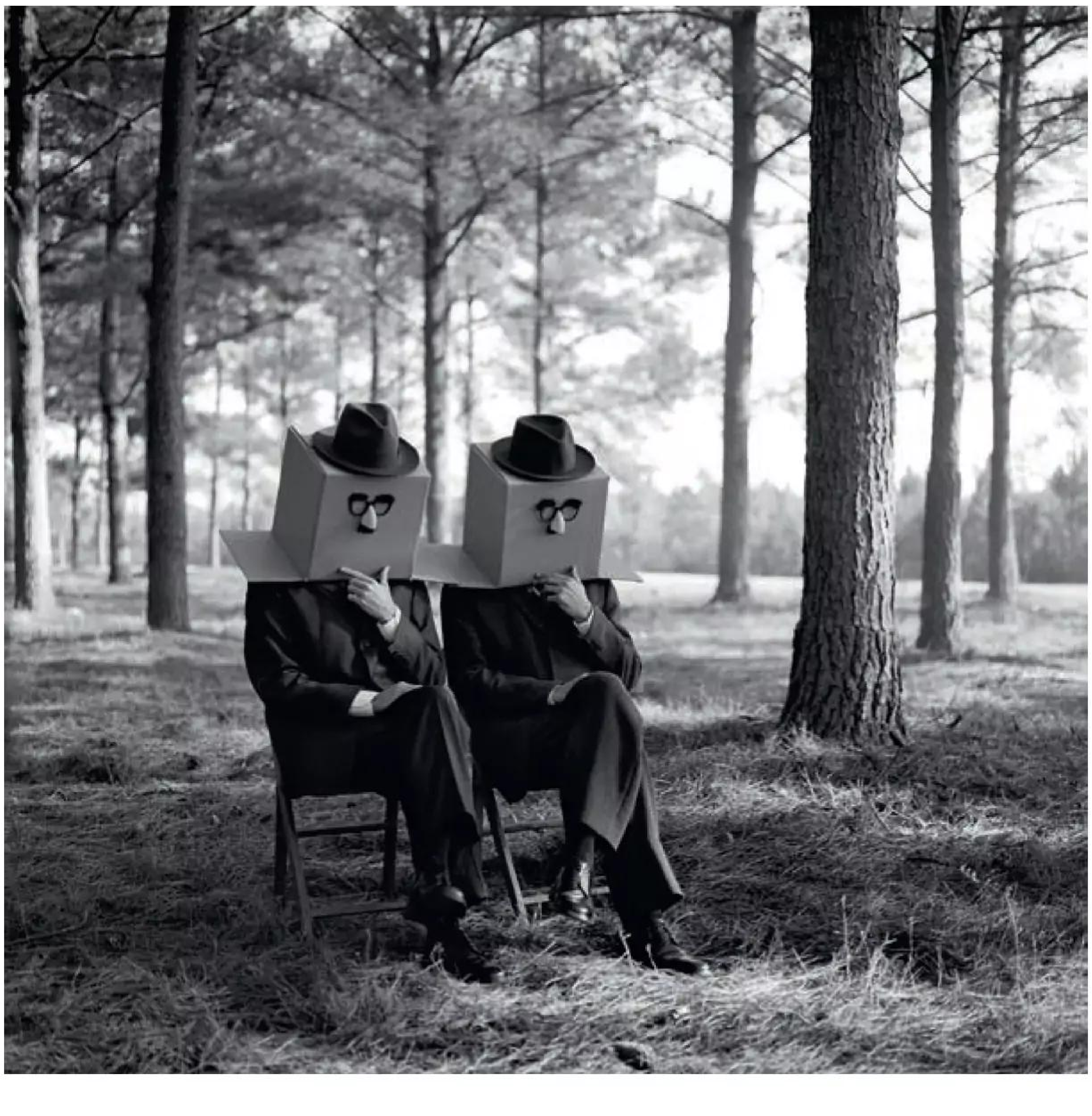
Smith was born into a prosperous family on Long Island, New York, in 1947. He was the son of Sanford Smith, the owner of a successful fashion company, Modelia Inc. Fashion was an everyday part of Smith's early life and models often spent time at his home. However, he rejected the career in the industry his father had envisaged and instead went on to study for a Masters in Theology at Yale University, while also studying photography under the tutelage of the acclaimed photojournalist Walker Evans. His early work included a series of portraits of the people of Israel, later published as *In the Land of Light*, and travel portraits and landscapes in other countries including Wales, Haiti and the American South.

However, in the mid-1980s his work took a different direction when he began to be commissioned by magazines and art directors to shoot portraits of prominent business leaders around the world. He broke new ground by photographing them in informal, everyday situations rather than formal workplace environments.

This work, in turn, led to fashion



Above: Twins in Tree Snedens Landing, New York 1999



Left: Men with Boxes on Head Brunswick, Georgia 2001

Right: Caroline with Opera Glasses No. 2 Charleston, South Carolina 2000

Below: Danielle in Boat Beaufort, South Carolina 1996

assignments for magazines, luxury brands and retailers, and to books including *The Hat Book* (1993). He quickly established his distinctive style and method of working, one that remained largely unchanged for the rest of his career.

For the rest of his life, he continued with his fashion-related commercial and editorial work, ultimately for hundreds of clients, plus assignments such as the cover shot for Cindy Lauper's album *At Last*. He continued working for several years after being diagnosed with leukaemia in 2000, but died suddenly in 2016, aged 68.

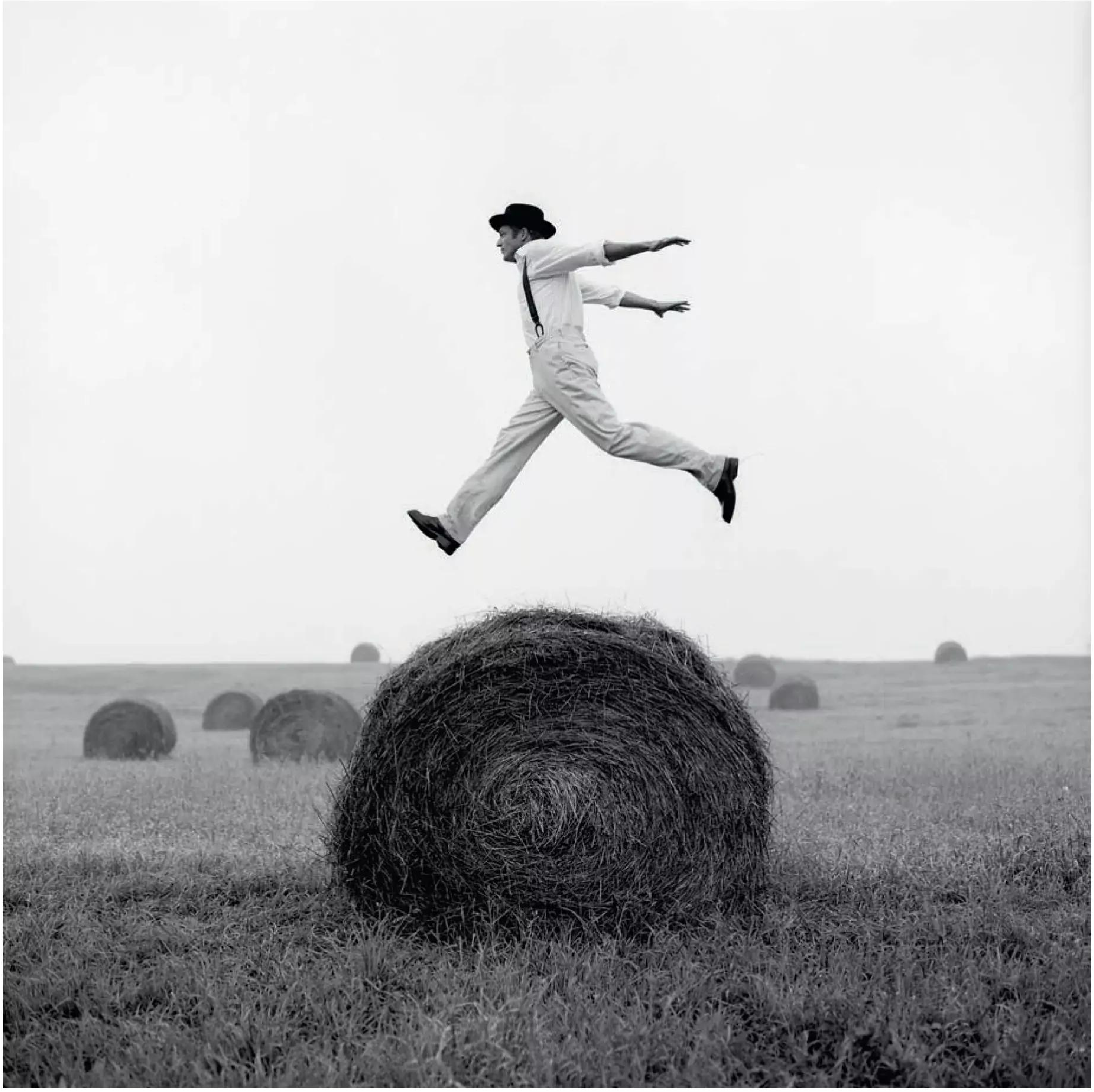
A selection of Smith's work, including some previously unseen images, is currently on show at the Palazzo Roverella, Rovigo, Italy and the Museo Franz Mayer in Mexico City, as well as in the monograph *Rodney Smith: Photography between Real and Surreal*. The book and exhibitions focus particularly on his black & white fine-art fashion work rather than the earlier travel and portrait work or the later colour work. 'He was not really a colourist,' Anne Morin says. 'He didn't need it.'

She believes that although Smith rejected his family's lifestyle and the drive to be a wealthy businessman, his upbringing ultimately had a significant influence on his career and the way he worked. 'I think he was born into that context of discipline, the search for perfection and elegance, and a certain social status that he projected on his work,' she tells me.

However, fashion itself was never his main interest when creating his images. In a rare talk about his work for B&H Photo shortly before he died, Smith said: 'The models are not the subject, they are part of the story, playing a game with me and telling a story, but they are not the reason the picture exists… the clothes are not the most important thing in my pictures. It's the picture.'

Working methods

Smith worked predominantly in black & white. He was strongly focused on achieving everything he wanted in-camera at the time of shooting and didn't crop his images or use digital manipulation at the printing stage. 'Photoshop is no fun to me,' he said. 'The fun is the actual shooting of the picture in the real world.'



Don Jumping over Hay Roll No. 1 Monkton, Maryland 1999

He shot his images with a Leica in the early part of his career, but from 1988 onwards he primarily worked with medium-format film cameras: a Hasselblad and a Mamiya 67. He didn't use digital cameras, though shot with colour film from 2002.

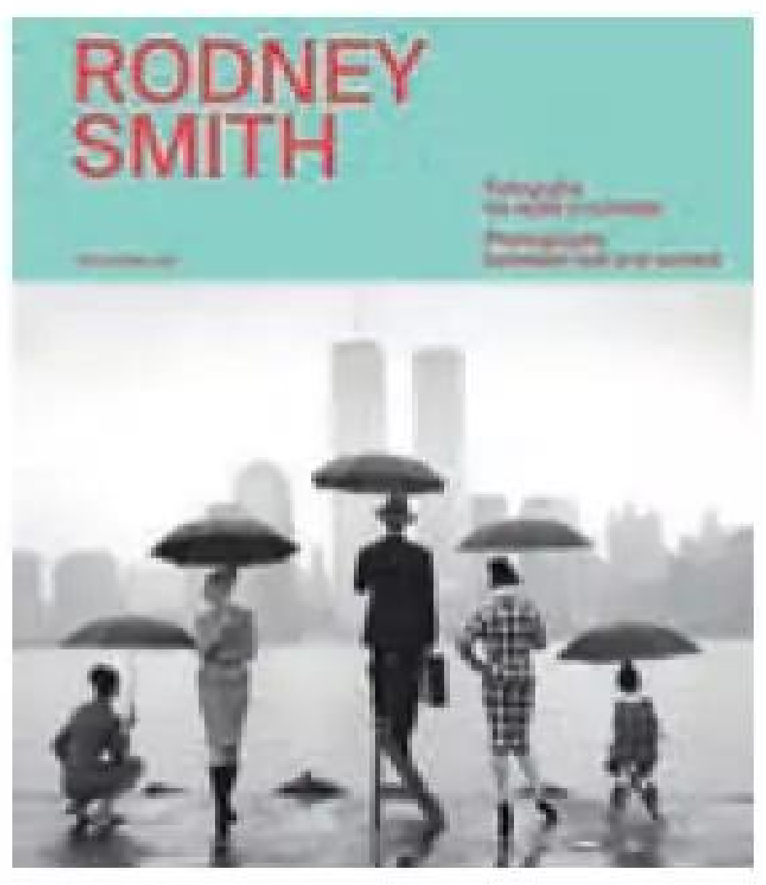
He was highly sensitive to the way objects and locations appeared in different types of natural light and almost entirely used daylight to shoot his images. He never shot with flash, but occasionally supplemented natural light with continuous lighting.

Even though Smith was meticulous in setting up his images, the actual shots were usually taken quickly. 'He created his pictures like a magician,' says Anne Morin. 'Although his pictures are extremely well-balanced, with everything in the right place, they were done in a very short time. He might have been working for eight hours trying hard to get the image he wanted, then the chance appeared.'

Smith's way of working – the combination of craftsmanship and serendipity – is illustrated by the story behind his best-known picture (used for the book cover). It was shot for the cover of the *New York Times Magazine* and shows five models holding umbrellas with the Manhattan skyline in the background. Due to rainfall on the day, the shoot was going to be cancelled until Smith had the idea of incorporating the umbrellas into the image.

'In that picture, everything is in the perfect place, everything is aligned, it's just a joy,' comments Morin. 'If anything was in a different place, such as the umbrellas or the way the models are standing, the magic would disappear. Smith was an artist, he had that really sensitive capacity to know exactly the right moment to take the picture.

'He would have taken a long time to pose the models exactly as he wanted them before taking the shot. You can see that from the contact sheets from that shoot, which are like little films because there's almost no variation between the images he took. He was polishing his work like a diamond. And when it was perfectly brilliant, it was done.' AP



Rodney Smith: Photography Between Real and Surreal is published by Silvana Editoriale, RRP £32. His work is on show in exhibitions at the Palazzo Roverella, Rovigo, Italy, until 1 February 2026 and at the Franz Mayer Museum, Mexico City, until March 2026.

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The dream makers

Kahran and Regis Bethencourt, the husband and wife behind CreativeSoul Photography, create high-concept portraits of children across the African diaspora, allowing them to tell their unique stories, as **Tracy Calder** explains

Kahran and Regis Bethencourt are makers of dreams. The day we sit down to chat, they've been discussing the logistics of turning a little girl into a snow leopard ballerina queen. 'I'm sure we'll figure it out,' laughs Kahran, and I believe her. Since 2014, this husband-and-wife team has been creating high-concept photoshoots allowing children to become the hero of their own stories. 'A lot of the time, especially in the black community, our stories are either rewritten or never told,' says Kahran. 'As artists, I feel it's up to us to point a mirror at these kids and let them tell their own stories. Whether they want to be a ballerina or a superhero, we photograph them the way they want to be photographed.'

Cupid's arrow

Back in 2004, Kahran and Regis were members of an online graphic designer forum, when cupid's arrow hit. 'We became a long-distance couple,' smiles Kahran. 'We would go back and forth between Oregon and Maryland.' Each time they met, they would take pictures of each other. 'I had one arm that was very muscular because I was holding a heavy camera all the time,' laughs Regis. Less than two years later, Regis joined Kahran in Oregon before the pair finally settled in Atlanta. At this point Regis decided to go back to college to study photography. It was a move that changed the course of their lives. 'I just learned along with him,' smiles Kahran. 'We kinda got a two-for-one deal with his schooling!'

Separate lanes

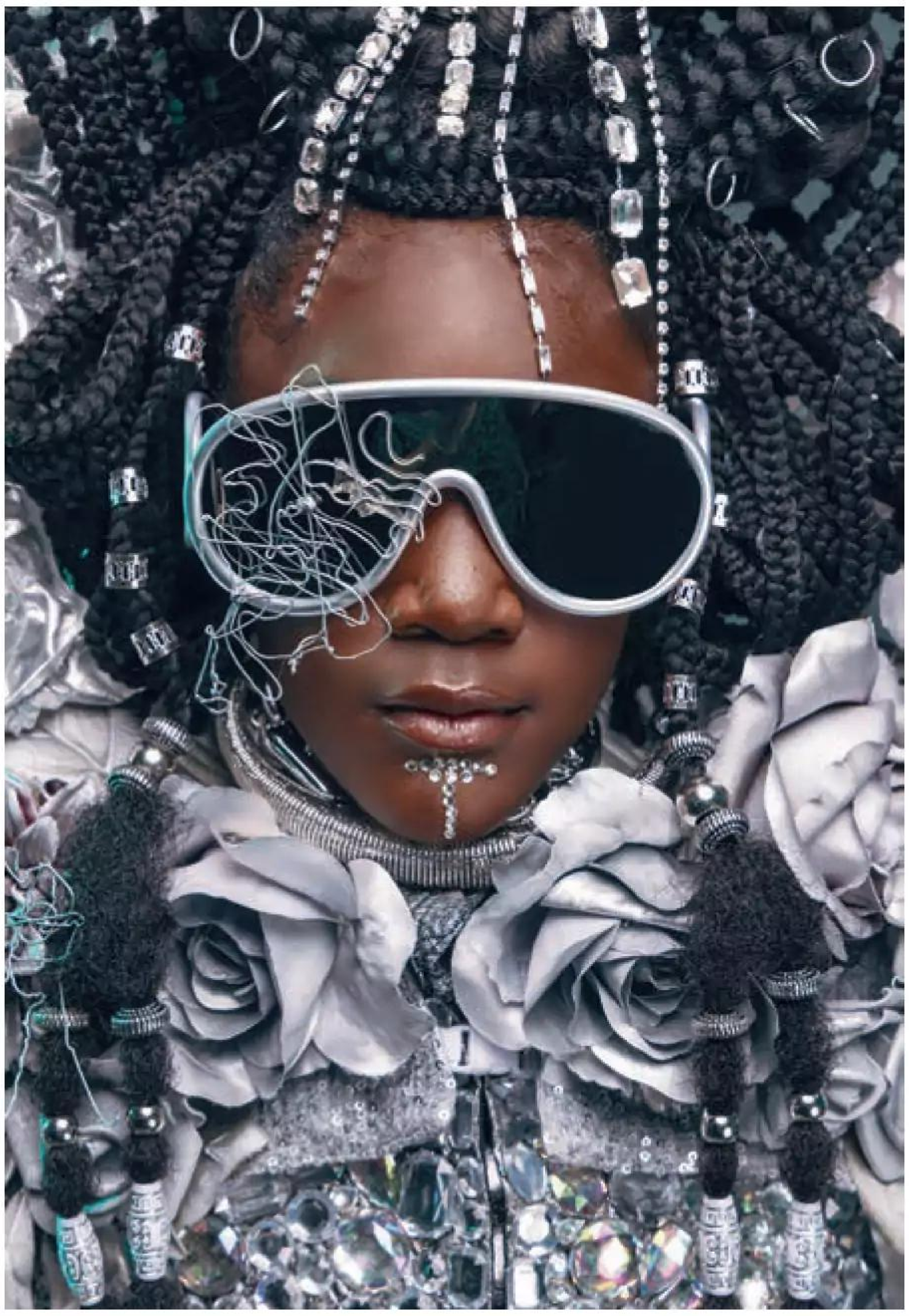
Kahran has a background in computer science, marketing and graphic design, so when the pair decided to launch CreativeSoul Photography in 2009 she took charge of the business-side of things. 'We both have different skills, but they merge together beautifully,' she says. 'Over time we have figured out a way to come together, but also have our own lanes. Regis doesn't like the client-facing stuff, so unless he's really needed, I usually handle all that.' Thanks to her marketing background, Kahran is perfectly placed to tackle social media and other 'web stuff'. Regis, on the other hand, enjoys the technical (and practical) side of photoshoots. 'He creates some of the props and wardrobe pieces and handles the lighting and the technical set up,' explains Kahran.

Finding a niche

During the week, Kahran and Regis stay in their own lanes, but at weekends they combine their skills to create stunning portraits that have appeared in the likes of *Teen Vogue* and *Glamour*, as well as featuring on CNN and BBC News. Their style is upbeat, colourful and energising, but it took them a while to find their niche. 'In the beginning, we went to photo conferences and watched videos and trainings, but it felt like there was something more in us that we wanted to do; something that we weren't seeing out there,' says Kahran. At the time, the pair was shooting everything from weddings and babies to families and flowers. 'Basically, anything people would pay us for,' laughs Regis. After a few years, they began to grow weary. 'We were like, oh my gosh, I don't want to do another wedding,' remembers Kahran.

Facing their fears

Looking back, the decision to concentrate on children's portraiture seems obvious. 'Even when we were shooting weddings, we would spend hours photographing the ring bearers without realising we were doing it,' admits Regis. But it still took a leap of faith to abandon income streams they'd come to rely on. 'To be honest, I was kind of scared,' admits Kahran. 'We ended up creating a separate website and separate marketing to try and grow our kids business. I was frightened to move away from the things that were making us money.' But thankfully, the Bethencourts faced their fears and, having acknowledged they were on the right path, started photographing children exclusively.



ALL PICTURES © CREATIVESOUL PHOTOGRAPHY

Opposite: Queen Energy – Madison

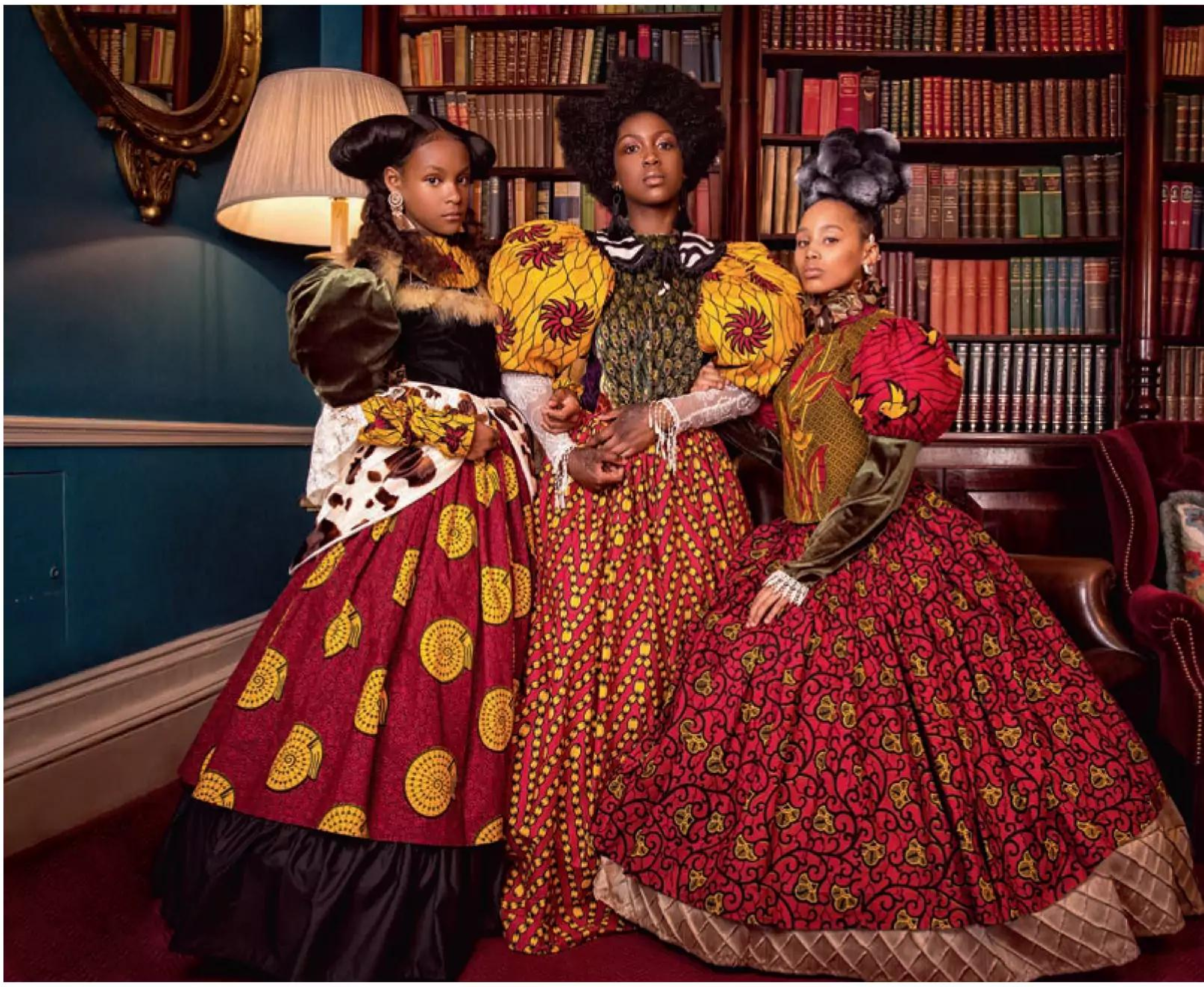
Above: Renaissance – Journi

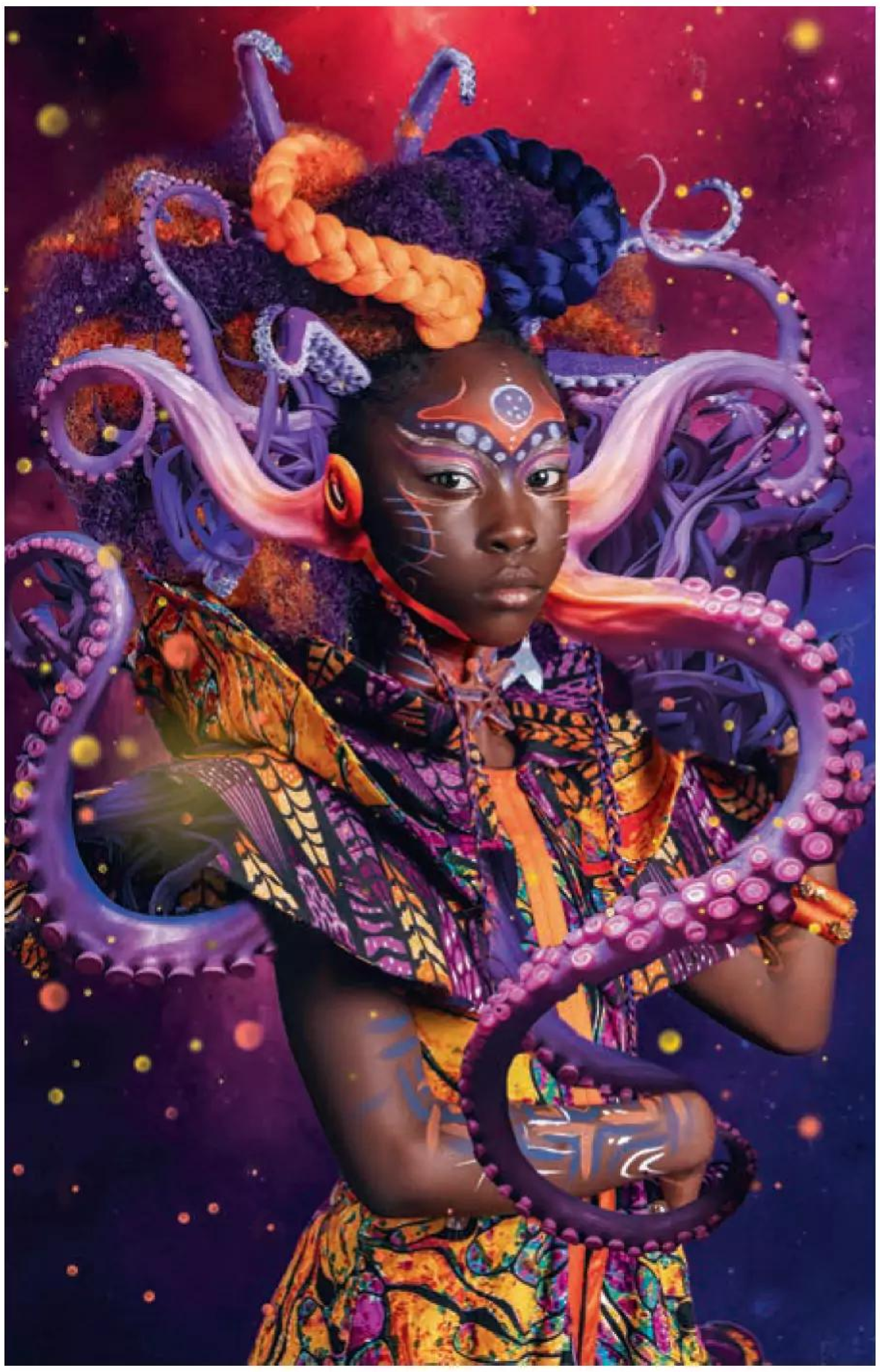
Hitting the road

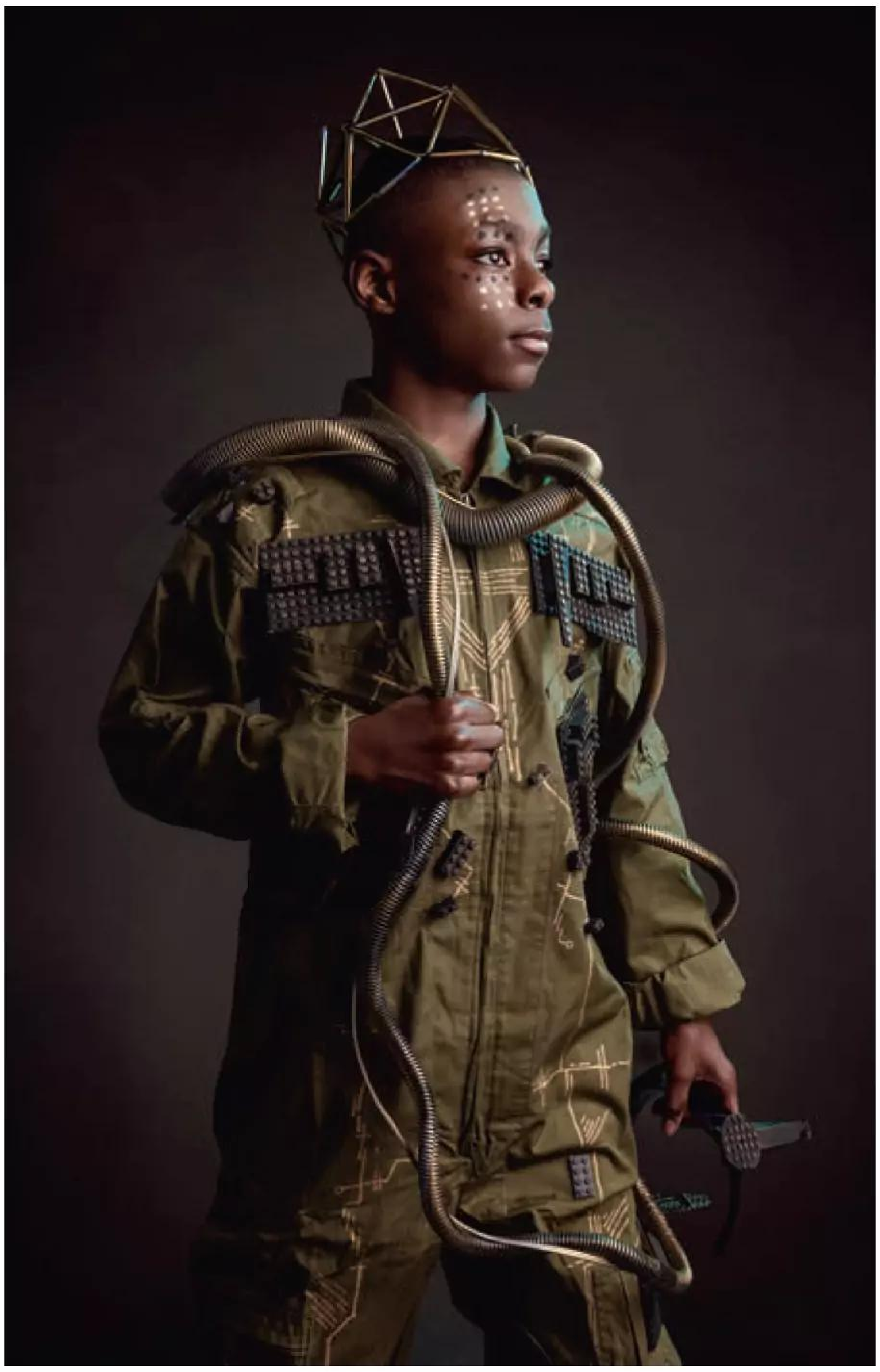
When your life and business are intertwined, it's important to regularly evaluate what's working, and pivot when needed. 'We were trying to figure out how to make our studio photography more interesting,' says Kahran, 'so we started playing around with different styling elements and themes.' With a renewed sense of energy and playfulness, they took to the road, offering themed photoshoots across the US. 'We let people know which city we were going to, parents would sign up and we would style all the kids in that city with one particular theme,' she explains. It was a wonderful experience, but after a year or so they felt ready for a change.

AfroArt series

Around this time a natural hair movement began to gather pace in the US (and overseas) and a blogger reached out to the couple, hoping to share their series. 'We thought, well, it's not really a series, but okay, sure,' says Kahran. The couple pulled out some images from their road trips and sent them over, not thinking







Clockwise from above:

NeoRoyals – Glory Book

AfroArt Series – KJ the DJ

Kahran & Regis – D. Finney Photography

AfroArt Series – Kinley

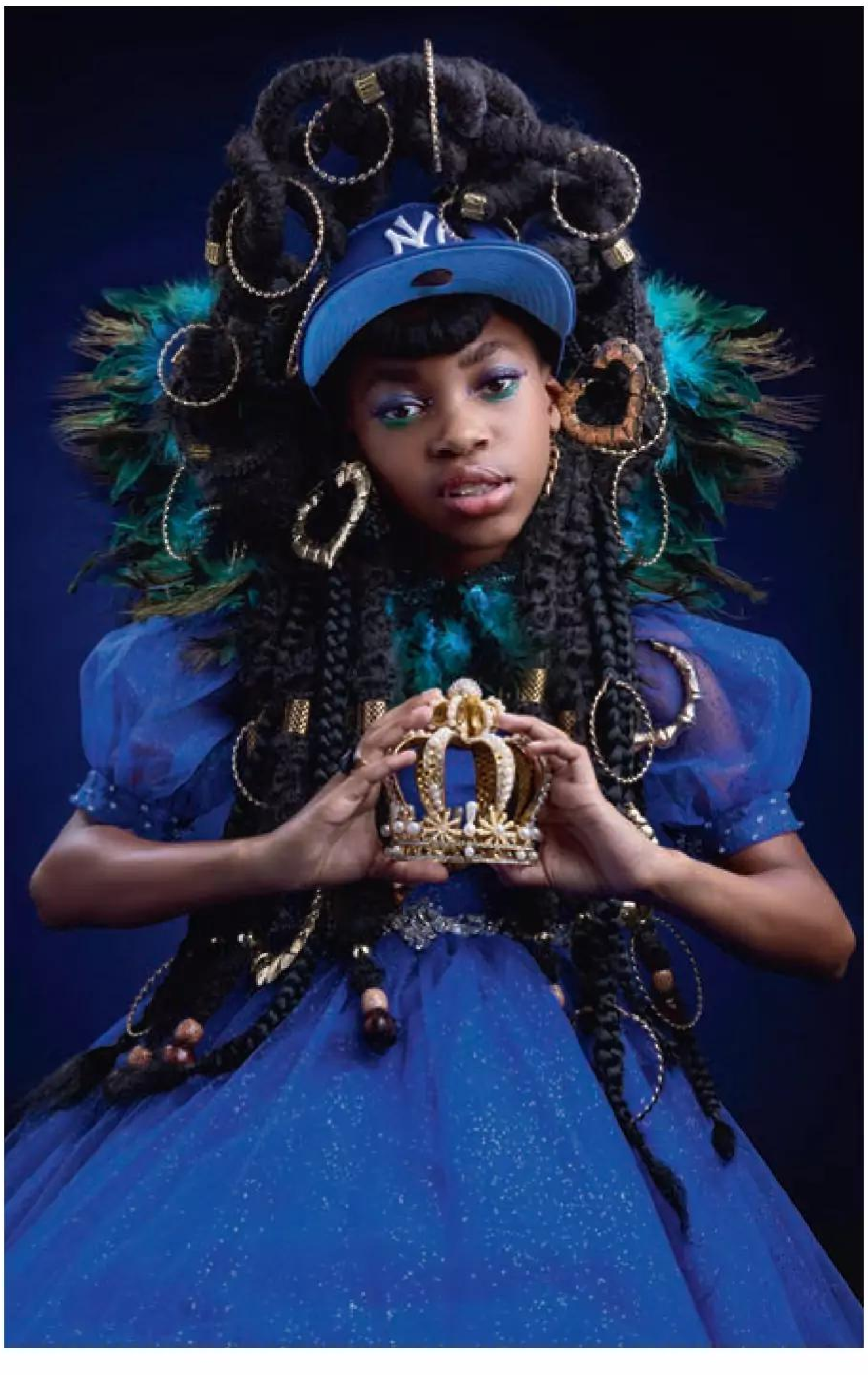
AfroArt Series – Justin

The Octavian Queen – Norah

too much about it. 'It was two days before Thanksgiving and we were literally talking about what to do next when our phones started to blow up,' remembers Regis. After appearing on multiple blogs, the 'series' was featured on Yahoo, CNN and BBC News. 'It was insane,' laughs Kahran. Encouraged by the support, they officially began their AfroArt series.

Helping hand

The AfroArt series celebrates black beauty, while also providing a platform for children to tell their stories. 'One of the girls we photographed was eight years old and understood college-level neuroscience,' recalls Regis. 'These are not the stories you hear in mainstream media,' adds Kahran. Having seen the AfroArt project, a publisher reached out. 'She said, "Look, I don't have kids, but my future kids, my nieces and nephews need this book in the world,"' recalls Kahran. The publisher then proceeded to walk the duo through the entire process, from finding an agent to making the book. Alongside the pictures, *GLORY: Magical Visions of Black Beauty* (which became a New York Times bestseller) contains essays about some of the children involved in the project – an addition that felt important for Kahran. 'I wanted a kid in Atlanta to see a kid in London or Ghana and understand what they're going through,' she says.



Princess project

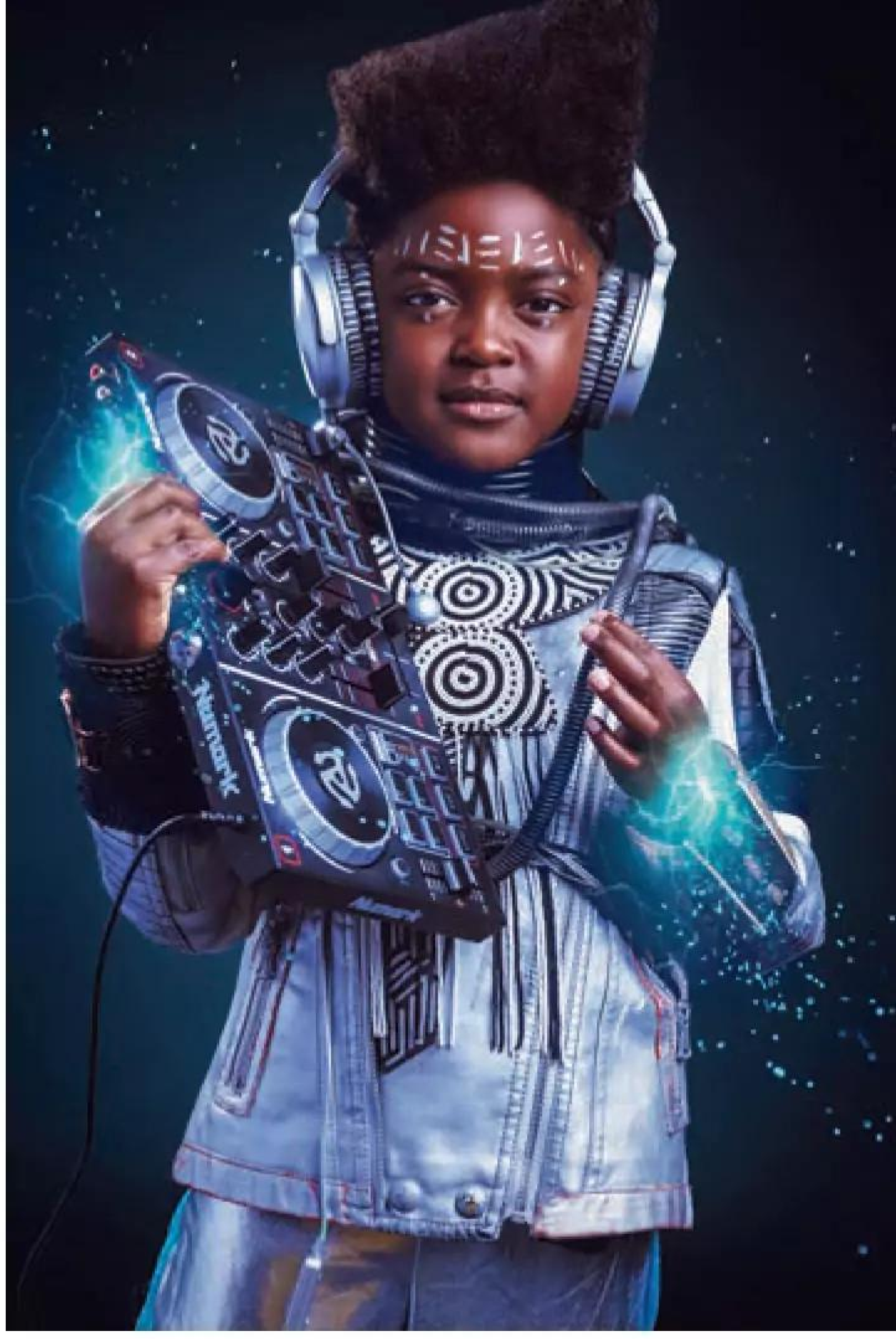
Their next project was a collaboration with hairstylist LaChanda Gatson called The Princess Project. While classic fairy tales often feature girls as damsels in distress, the Bethencourts' subjects appear confident, self-possessed and commanding. It was a twist that appealed to the public. 'The project went viral,' smiles Kahran. In fact, their modern-day princesses were so popular that toy company Hasbro (in partnership with Disney) asked if they would consider working with them on a series of dolls. 'We were like, of course!' laughs Kahran. In the end, the couple photographed four girls for the collection. 'We did Cinderella, Snow White, Tiana and Rapunzel,' says Kahran. 'Then we worked closely with Disney to figure out hair textures, skin tones, fabrics and things like that. It was a really cool project to work on.'

New stories

Working on the Disney project lit a creative spark in Regis and Kahran, which led to their second book, *Crowned: Magic Fairy and Folktales of the African Diaspora*. 'We wanted to reimagine existing fairy tales, but we also felt that we didn't hear enough African folklore stories,' explains Kahran. Naturally, they decided to combine the two, creating new stories and characters of their own. '*Crowned* allows kids of colour to see themselves represented in traditional stories while opening them up to other stories, whether it's African folklore or totally new characters,' says Kahran. 'It can morph into so many things. It has been such a cool journey.'

Creative platform

For Kahran and Regis, high-concept photoshoots offer opportunities for creative expression while also providing a stage for kids to tell their stories. 'We like to use our platform to give everybody else a platform,' echoes Regis. And by that he means the hairstylist, the makeup artist, the seamstress, the designers, the children and the stories. 'We are serving as dream makers,' says Kahran. 'The parents are often as excited as the kids because they know what it means. We didn't have these types of images growing up, so they understand the weight of it and what it means to see their kids photographed in this way.'



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Tools and technology

Regis and Kahran are Canon Explorers of Light and usually pair a Canon EOS Mark II with a Canon 24-105mm lens. For lighting, they keep things simple with lights and modifiers from Profoto (Regis is a big fan of clamshell lighting). When it comes to software, AI has become a handy tool in the Bethencourts' creative kit bag. 'AI helps us to communicate our ideas to the team,' says Kahran. 'I think it actually enhances our creativity.'

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Round nine
Urban Life

Some 85% of the UK's population lives in the urban environment, meaning that most of us have access to inspirational subjects for this category. Whether you're drawn to grand, traditional structures or sleek, contemporary works of art, the possibilities are endless. And urban life isn't only about the buildings that make the environment – the people are what make it, too. So you can also enter classic street photography scenes into this round, where humans interact with their environment to create quirky moments that are here one moment, and gone a split second later. While we fully expect to see and welcome images that explore the buildings and skylines of our major cities, this round also encompasses seaside resorts, village life and more.

Your guest judge

Your guest judge for Round Nine, Urban Life, is Denise Maxwell. Denise covers a wide range of genres and is also a photography mentor. She has been named one of the top ten Black Wedding Photographers by *Hitched* magazine and her work has been published in *OK!*, *The Independent* and *The Times*. See more at lensilearning.co.uk

Plan your APOY 2025 year

Below is a list of all this year's rounds, including when they open, when they close and the dates the results will be announced in AP

THEME	OPENS PHOTOCROWD & AP	CLOSES	SHORTLIST	RESULTS
Black & White	6 May 2025	26 May 2025	11 June	26 June 2025
People & Portraits	27 May 2025	23 Jun 2025	9 July	24 July 2025
Close-ups & Details	24 June 2025	21 Jul 2025	6 August	21 Aug 2025
Landscapes	22 July 2025	18 Aug 2025	3 September	18 Sep 2025
Celebrating Colour	19 August 2025	15 Sep 2025	1 October	16 Oct 2025
Night & Low Light	16 September 2025	13 Oct 2025	29 October	13 Nov 2025
Animal Kingdom	14 October 2025	10 Nov 2025	26 November	11 Dec 2025
Movement	11 November 2025	8 Dec 2025	23 December	8 Jan 2026
Urban Life	**9 December 2025**	**5 Jan 2026**	**21 Jan 2026**	**5 Feb 2026**
Open	6 January 2026	2 Feb 2026	18 Feb 2026	5 Mar 2026

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Enter the code below via Photocrowd to get one free entry to Round Nine – Urban Life

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Sam Binding came seventh in last year's Urban Life round with a stunning drone shot taken in the early morning light

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ALL ABOUT APOY 2025

The camera club award

Do you belong to a camera club? You can accumulate precious points for your society when you enter APOY. After all the ten rounds have been completed, the club with the most points will win the ViewSonic X2-4K projector – a 4K HDR High Brightness Smart LED projector boasting a 1440p resolution for crisp visuals. And the club member who contributed the most points to their winning club's overall tally, will take home the VP2786-4K, a superb 27in ViewSonic ColorPro VP86 Series professional monitor, as their prize.

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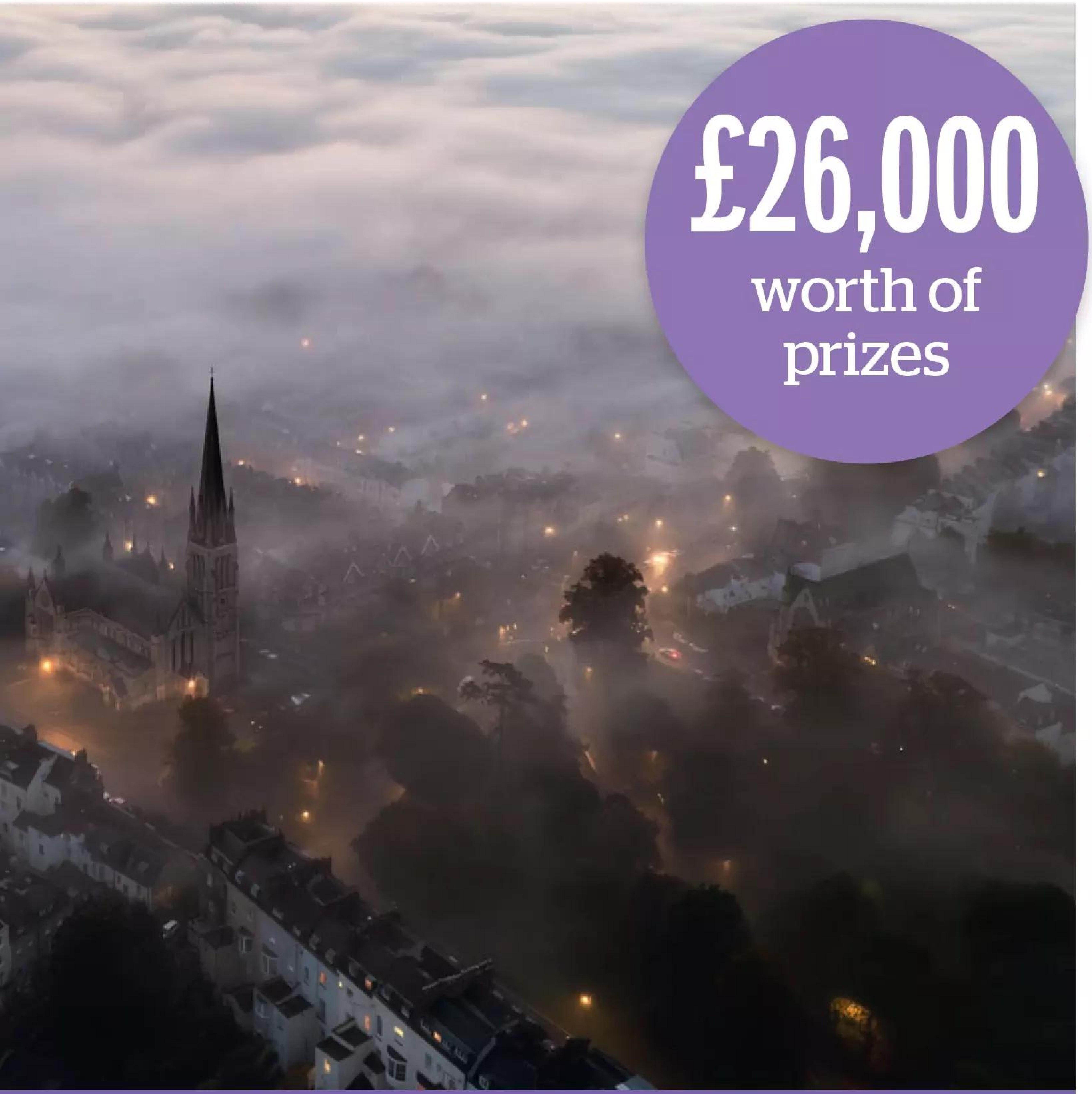

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The Young APOY award

Now a well-established part of APOY, the Young Photographer of the Year competition encourages our up-and-coming snappers. Entrants should be 21 years old or younger by the competition's final closing date of 2 February 2026. All the categories are the same as for the main contest – simply select the Young APOY option on Photocrowd when you upload your images. Entry is free. Each category winner receives voucher prizes from DxO and Bob Books, with the overall winner after ten rounds receiving a £500 voucher to spend at Camera Centre UK*.

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What you win

APOY prizes

The winner of each round of APOY receives a voucher for £500 to spend at Camera Centre UK*, plus free DxO PhotoLab and FilmPack licences worth £340, and a £50 voucher for Bob Books, plus a one-year subscription to The School of Photography, worth £120. The two runners-up in each round will win a free DxO Nik Collection licence worth £146 and a £25 voucher for Bob Books. The overall winner after ten rounds wins a £1,000 voucher to spend at Camera Centre UK* and a £100 voucher for Bob Books.

Young APOY prizes

The winner of each round of Young APOY receives free DxO PhotoLab and FilmPack licences worth £340, and a £50 voucher for Bob Books, as well as a one-year subscription to The School of Photography, worth £120. The two runners-up in each round will win a free DxO Nik Collection licence worth £146 and a £25 voucher for Bob Books. The overall winner of Young APOY wins a £500 Camera Centre UK* voucher and a £100 Bob Books voucher.

Camera club prizes

The winning club receives a ViewSonic 4K projector, and a first-class monitor for the club's highest-scoring member.

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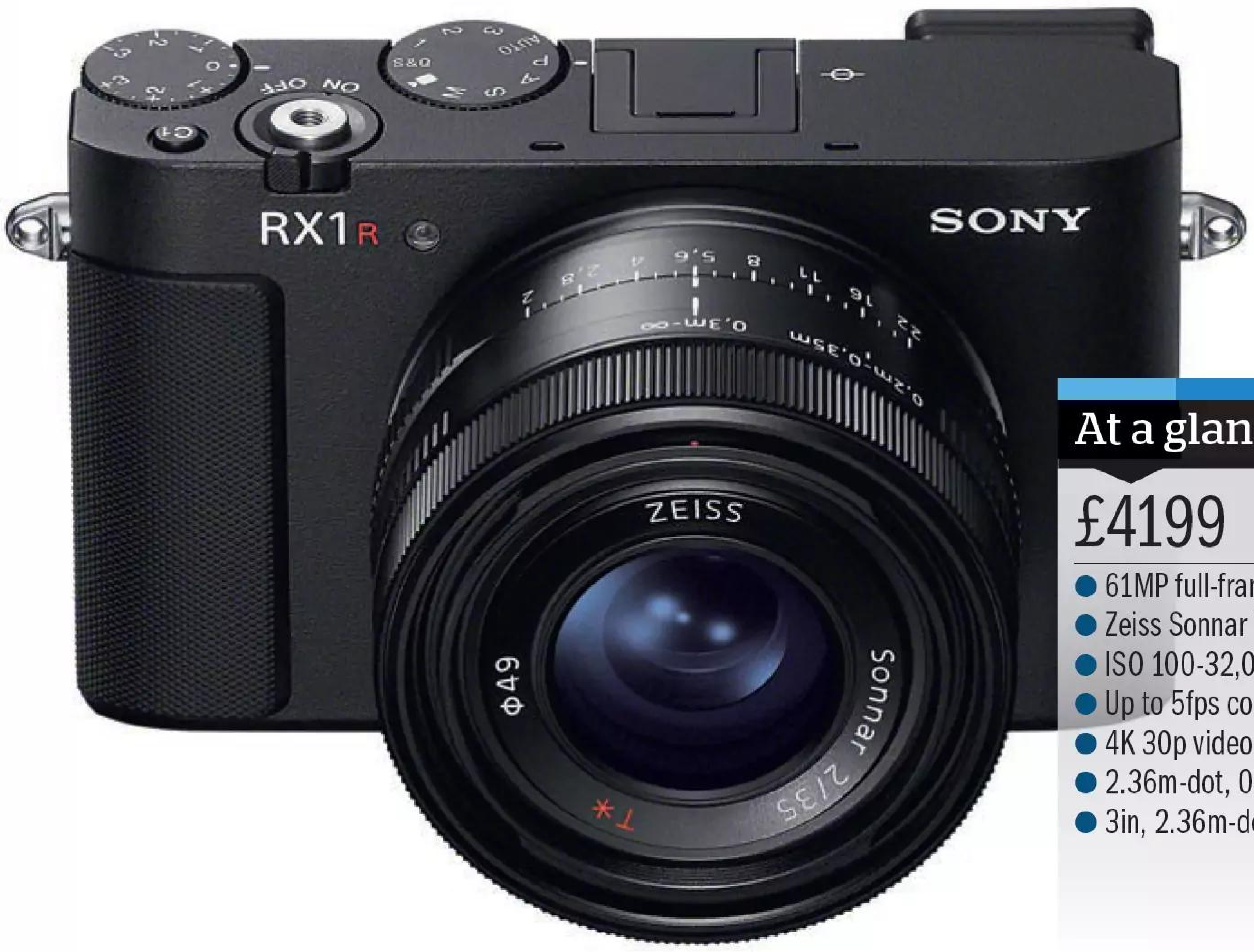

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Sony RX1R III

Sony's full-frame compact offers fantastic image quality in a tiny body, but it has its drawbacks too, as **Andy Westlake** finds out

For and against

- + Superb raw image quality from the best full-frame sensor around
- + Excellent Zeiss Sonnar lens
- + Physical aperture ring and exposure compensation dial
- + Very capable subject detection autofocus
- – No handgrip and cramped controls
- – No image stabilisation
- – Screen is fixed and doesn't tilt
- – No specific claim of weather-sealing
- – Focus area selection is relatively awkward (no joystick)

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Data file

Sensor	61MP full-frame BSI-CMOS, 35.7 x 23.8mm
Output size	9504 x 6336
Lens	35mm f/2
Shutter speeds	30-1/4000sec (mechanical); 30-1/8000sec (electronic)
Sensitivity	ISO 100-32,000 (standard); ISO 50-102,400 (expanded)
Exposure modes	PASM, Auto, Movie, S&Q, 3x Custom
Metering	Multi, Centre, Spot, Average, Highlight
Exposure comp	+/-5 EV in 0.3EV steps
Cont shooting	5fps
Screen	3in, 2.36m-dot fixed touchscreen
Viewfinder	2.36m-dot, 0.7x magnification
AF points	693
Video	4K 30fps, Full HD 120fps
External mic	3.5mm stereo, multi-interface shoe
Memory card	UHS-II SD
Power	NP-FW50 Li-ion
Battery life	270 shots (EVF), 300 shots (LCD)
Dimensions	113.3x67.9x87.5mm
Weight	498g with battery and card

Sony took everyone by surprise back in July, when it announced a new full-frame fixed-lens compact camera, in the shape of the RX1R III. Appearing a mere decade after its predecessor, it employs a similar fixed Zeiss Sonnar 35mm f/2 lens, but now with a 60MP sensor. This means it promises stunning image quality to match any full-frame camera in a body that, if not exactly pocketable, will certainly fit into a small bag. It's not hard to see where the attraction lies.

Naturally, you get some significant technology updates, as we'd expect to see after such a long gap between models. Most obviously, Sony's AI co-processor brings subject recognition for autofocus. The body design has been refreshed too, with changes including a neater flat top-plate design and a fixed, rather than pop-up, viewfinder.

It's probably no surprise to learn that getting this technology and image quality in such a small package doesn't come cheap, with the RX1R III costing a pretty eye-watering £4,199 at launch. That's an awful lot more than the camera with which it will inevitably be most closely compared: the hugely popular Fujifilm X100VI, with its 40MP APS-C sensor and 35mm equivalent f/2 lens.

As we'll see, the RX1R III comes with its fair share of compromises and idiosyncrasies, many of which can be directly attributed to its small body size. So the question is whether its unquestionable attractions offset the irritations and quirks that Sony has put in our way. Let's take a closer look.

Thanks to its tried-and-tested 60MP sensor, the RX1R III delivers excellent image quality
Sony RX1R III, 1/320sec at f/8, ISO 100

Features

In many respects, the RX1R III counts as a marriage of very familiar components. Its 60MP sensor is presumably the same as that used by several other Sony cameras already, including the A7R IV, A7R V, and A7CR. It delivers a standard sensitivity range of ISO 100-32,000, with extended settings covering ISO 50-102,400.

Meanwhile, the Zeiss Sonnar 35mm f/2 lens is apparently unchanged from previous RX1 generations. It's an 8-element, 7-group design with internal focusing. The minimum focus distance is normally 30cm, but twisting a ring towards the front of the barrel moves the entire optical system forward by a couple of millimetres, engaging a close-up mode that covers 20-35cm. There's a 49mm filter thread surrounded by a bayonet mount for an optional hood.

The camera employs a leaf shutter built into the lens, and the maximum speed is limited by how quickly the shutter can open and uncover the entire aperture; 1/2000sec at f/2, 1/3200sec at f/4, and 1/4000sec at f/5.6. But in practice, 1/2000sec isn't fast enough to shoot at f/2 and ISO 100 in bright sunlight.

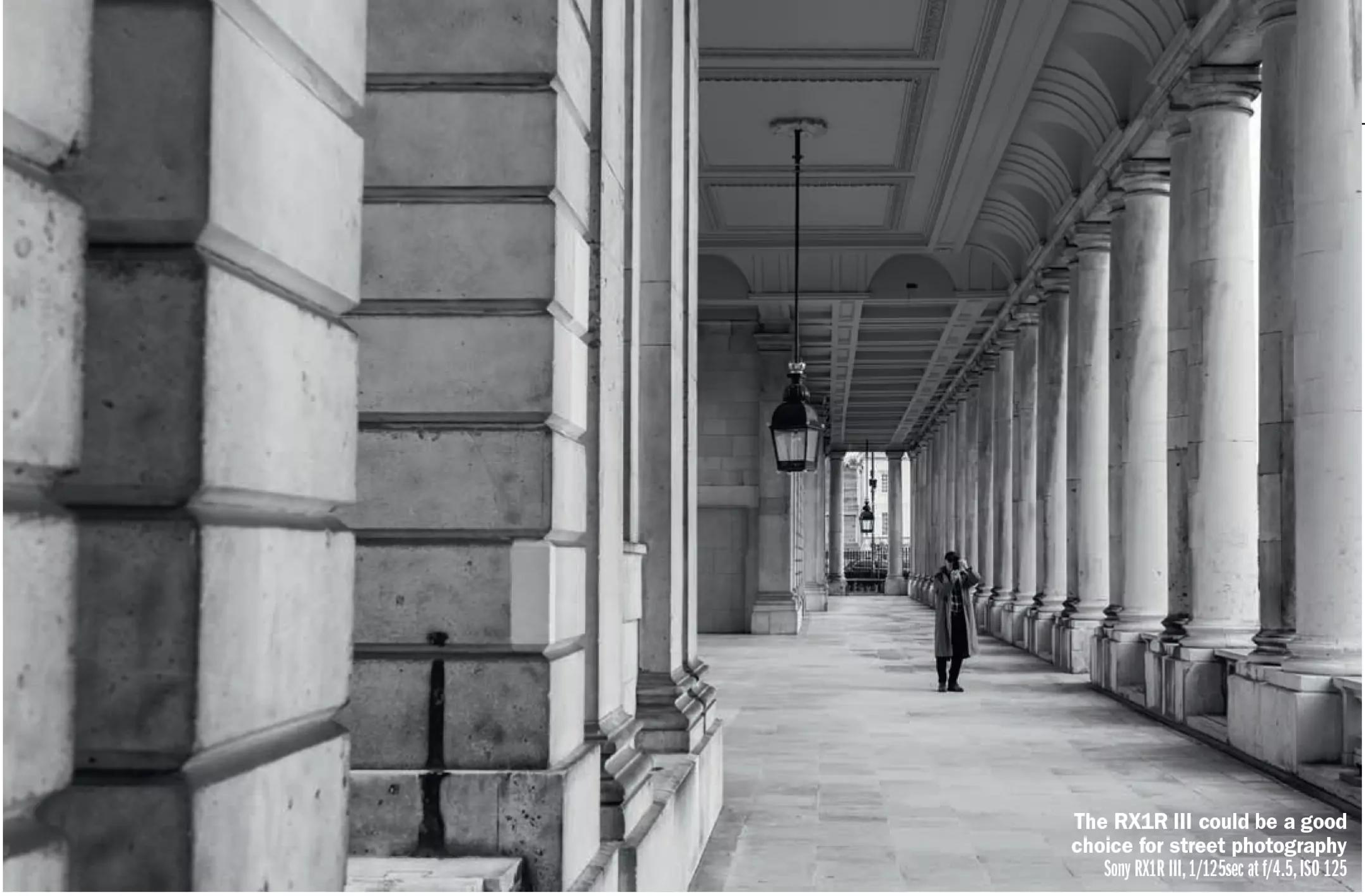
You can get around this using the electronic shutter, which allows 1/8000sec at any aperture. Unfortunately, though, the camera isn't smart enough to switch modes when necessary, so you have to manually select electronic shutter in the menu every single time, and then remember to switch it off again afterwards, as rolling shutter effects with this sensor can be severe. There's no switchable ND filter built into the lens, either.

Continuous shooting is available at 5 frames per second. While on paper that might look slow compared to its competitors, it be should be plenty for the kinds of subjects you're likely to use the camera for. I spent most of my time shooting single images at a time, and I suspect most users will, too. Indeed, Sony hasn't even felt the need to assign drive mode to a physical button – usually it's accessed using the left key of the d-pad.

When it comes to video, you get 4K recording at 30fps, and Full HD at 120fps. There's a 3.5mm microphone socket onboard for higher-quality audio, and you can also fit Sony's own microphones directly onto the hot shoe without needing a wire. Overall, though, it's very clear that the RX1R III is primarily built for photography.

As always, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth are built in for smartphone connectivity, using Sony's Creators' app. Initial pairing and setup is straightforward enough, with the camera prompting you through the process when you first turn it on. You can copy images to your smartphone for sharing and use your phone as a remote control via either Wi-Fi or a USB-C cable, with the latter being quicker and more stable.

My main concerns with the RX1R III, however, lie with the features that Sony has missed out. There's no space for either optical or mechanical sensor-shift image stabilisation, just electronic stabilisation for video shooting. The rear touchscreen is fixed, as opposed to the tilting design of its predecessor. And there's no joystick for setting the focus area.



The RX1R III could be a good choice for street photography
Sony RX1R III, 1/125sec at f/4.5, ISO 125

Build and handling

Without doubt, the RX1R III's standout feature is its petite size. The body is a rectangular box measuring 113 x 68 x 30mm, with a lens on the front that's approximately 65mm in diameter and 58mm long. But while the body's frontal area is dramatically smaller than its rivals, the overall front-to-back depth of 88mm means it isn't any more portable – you'll still need a small bag. In contrast, the Fujifilm X100VI's slimline lens means I can slip it into plenty of coat pockets.

Sony hasn't over-burdened the RX1R III with either styling or ergonomics. There's a rather minimalist textured rubber grip on the front, and a small space for your thumb on the back. I found the handgrip to be small and cramped, and I consider its larger rivals more pleasant to hold and shoot with. But others may have the opposite opinion.

One thing you can't complain about is the build quality, with the metal body feeling solid and robust. It's worth noting, though, that Sony doesn't describe the camera as weather-sealed.

Operationally, the RX1R III is a mixture of the brilliant and the obtuse. As before, you get direct access to the main exposure settings via an aperture ring around the lens and an exposure compensation dial on top, with an electronic dial beside your thumb for setting the shutter speed. ISO is changed using the rear d-pad/dial, or you can leave it on Auto.

Existing RX1 users may be disappointed by the loss of the focus mode switch that was on the front of previous models. But there's a good reason for this. Now, pressing the AF-ON button on the back doesn't just activate autofocus, but also engages subject detection and tracking with continuous AF. A half-press of the shutter button will activate autofocus in the normal fashion.

Focus mode selection is still readily accessible, via what used to be the video record button on the side of the handgrip. This reassignment also means that you're no longer likely to initiate video recording accidentally. Instead, you either have to set the mode dial to the movie position and press the shutter release, or use a touch button.

Most of the other major settings can be set via the Fn button, which pulls up a user-customisable set of options onscreen. Alternatively, swiping inwards from either edge of the screen activates a set of touch buttons which do many of the same things. You can also assign your most-used functions to the external buttons.

My biggest annoyance with the RX1R III, operationally, is the way the rear control dial/d-pad has two distinctly different modes. In one, the buttons activate specific functions: Up cycles through the various onscreen information displays, while Right is used to change the ISO. Pressing the centre button changes mode, so the buttons move the focus area.

The problem here is two-fold. Firstly, it means AF point positioning is slower and clunkier than using a joystick. Secondly, it's all-too-easy to press a button expecting it to do one thing, only to discover you're in the wrong mode. This behaviour can make using the RX1R III an exercise in frustration.

As a result, I think most people will find that the best way to set the focus point is using the touchscreen. But Sony hasn't switched this on for viewfinder shooting by default, so you have to find and enable it in the menu. You'll probably also want to change the positioning mode from 'absolute' to 'relative', which is much more intuitive.

If you do need to dive into the menu to change settings, you'll find it's vast and sprawling, with no fewer than 55 pages. This makes it hard to find anything you do want to modify. Luckily, you can easily place options into a custom My Menu, by pressing the Delete key when they're selected.

Overall, if you're prepared to use the RX1R III in a specific way, in manual or aperture priority with Auto ISO, and using the AF-ON button or touchpad for focusing,

With no image stabilisation, you'll have to use high ISO settings in low light
Sony RX1R III, 1/125sec at f/2, ISO 6400

then it can work pretty well. But I think its rivals are better designed and much nicer to use.

As has become common on high-resolution compact cameras, Sony has provided a digital zoom function, which is activated by pressing the C1 button beside the shutter release. This gives settings equivalent to 50mm at 29MP, and 70mm at 15MP. The camera stores a cropped JPEG file plus a full-size raw, with the crop recorded in its metadata. Personally, I quite like this feature – I don't necessarily want to shoot at 35mm all the time, and it lets me visualise and compose for tighter crops.

Sony's implementation does, however, leave something to be desired. Firstly, the viewfinder display drops dramatically in resolution. Secondly, any crop you set is retained when you switch the camera off and then on again. This is surprisingly easy to miss, especially when you're using the screen.

Viewfinder and screen

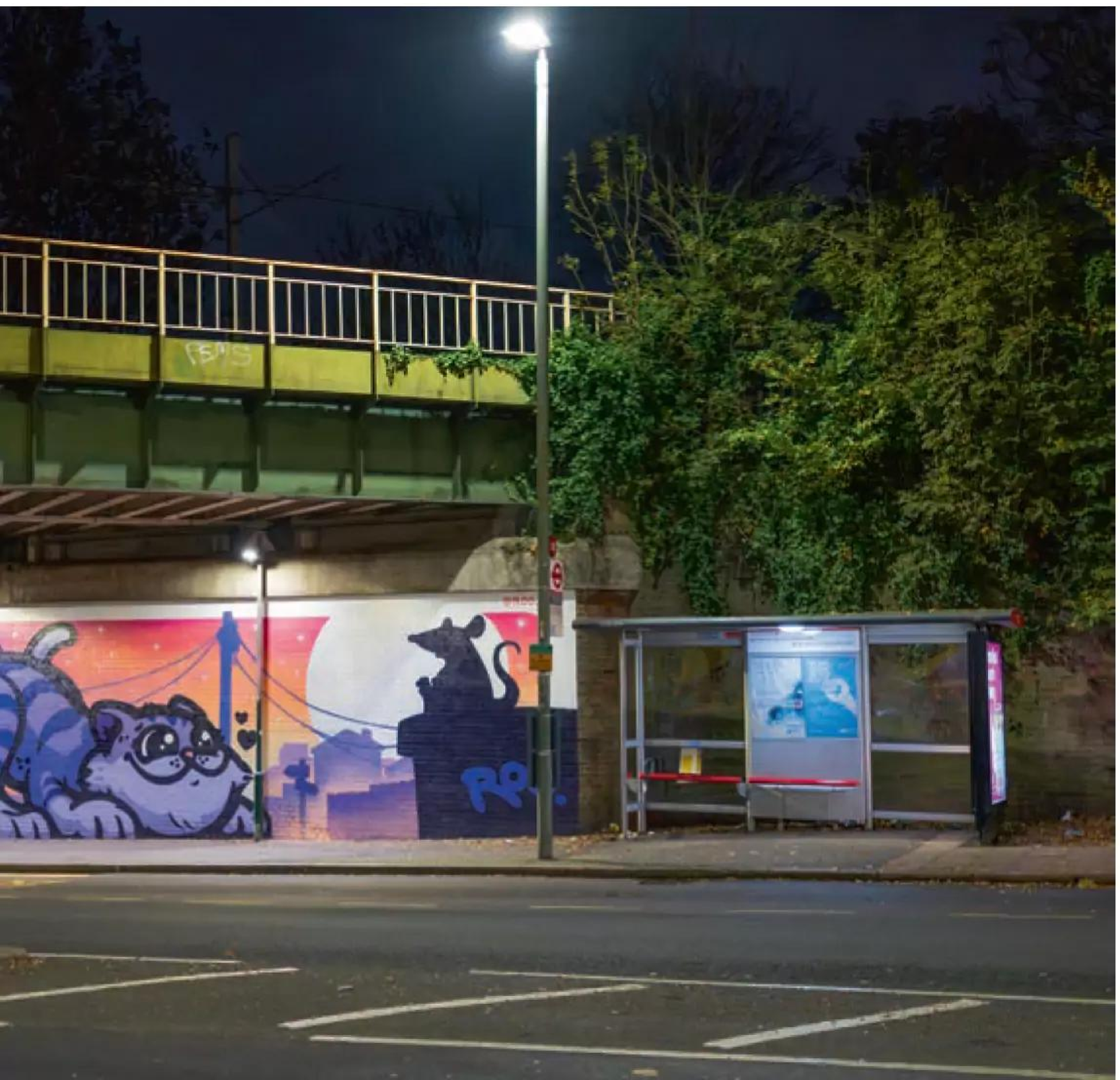
One of the most significant differences between the RX1R III and its predecessor lies with how you compose your images. Where the II had a pop-up viewfinder and a tilting screen, on the III both are fixed in place. One is a good thing; the other really isn't.

On the one hand, I like the fact that the viewfinder is now always available for shooting, and you're never held up by having to pop it open. It's also possible to fit a proper eyecup, and a deep rubber one is supplied in the box that secures in place using a screw. If, like me, you wear glasses, you may find it difficult to see right into the corners with the eyecup in place. But I'll happily take that for the extra shading it offers.

With its 2.36m-dot resolution and 0.7x magnification, the viewfinder is perfectly serviceable without being outstanding. Colour, exposure, white balance and depth-of-field are all previewed by default, and you can cycle through various display modes, including a live histogram and electronic levels. But as is Sony's way, you're not allowed to view both at the same time.

Reverting to a fixed rear screen is, however, a perplexing step backwards on Sony's part. It means that if you want to shoot from low angles, you're going to have to get down on the floor. Tilting screens are also really useful for portraits or street photography – both of which the camera is likely to be used for.

The screen itself is a 3in unit with an impressive 2.36m-dot resolution. It has a 4:3 aspect ratio, which allows key shooting data to be displayed on a black strip at the bottom for a nice, uncluttered view. But this also means that the preview image is a little smaller than on the X100VI, with its 3:2 screen.



Focal points

While the RX1R III looks similar to its decade-old predecessor, there are some significant changes

Connectors

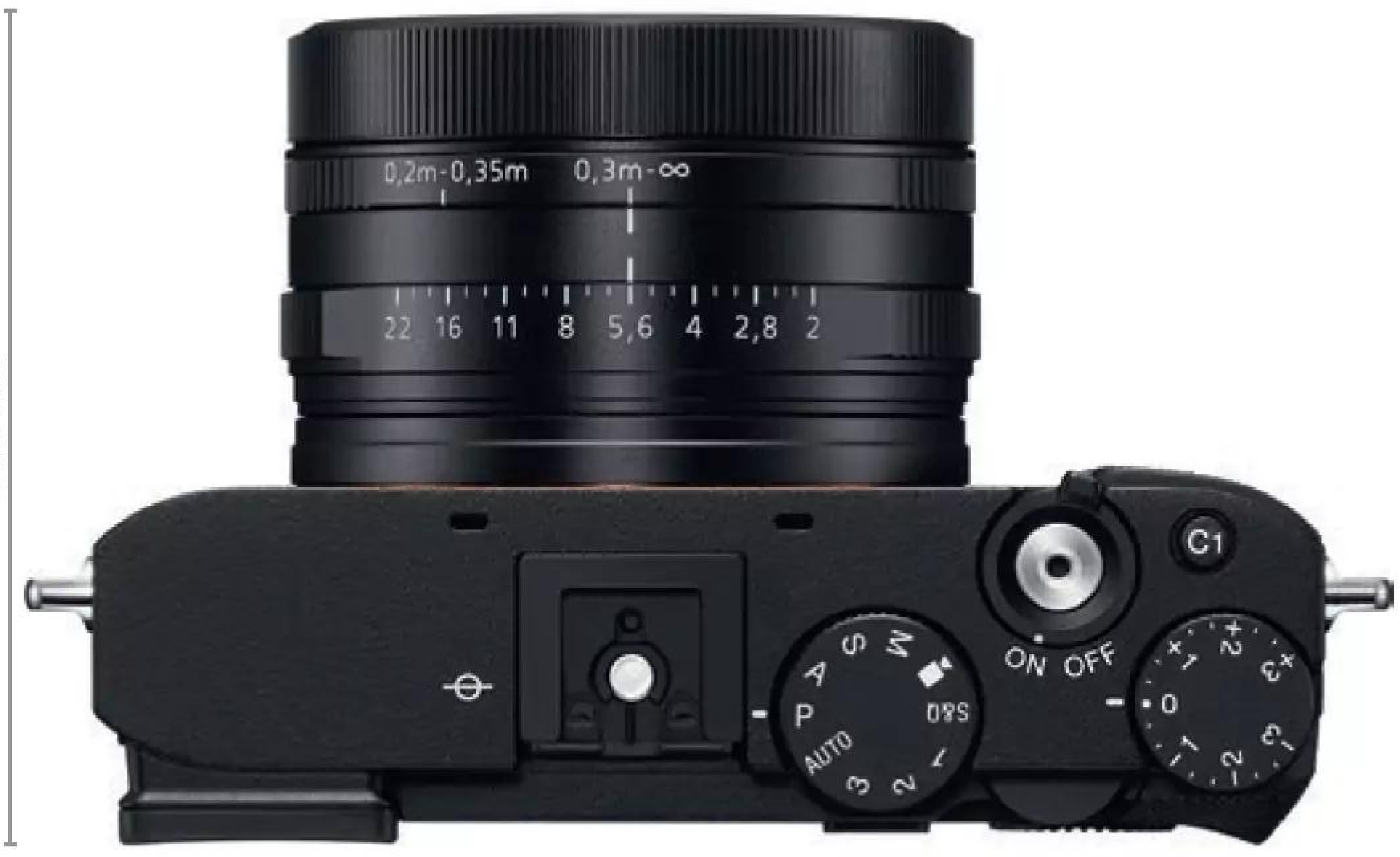
Behind a neat hinged door on the side, you'll find micro-HDMI, USB-C, and 3.5mm stereo microphone ports. You can't plug in headphones for monitoring audio.

Remote release

The shutter is threaded for a mechanical cable release, but there's no Micro-USB port for an electronic release. You can also use a Bluetooth wireless release.

Power

Sony's familiar NP-FW50 Li-ion battery is rated for 270 shots using the EVF, and 300 with the LCD. Third-party spares are cheap and easy to find.



Storage

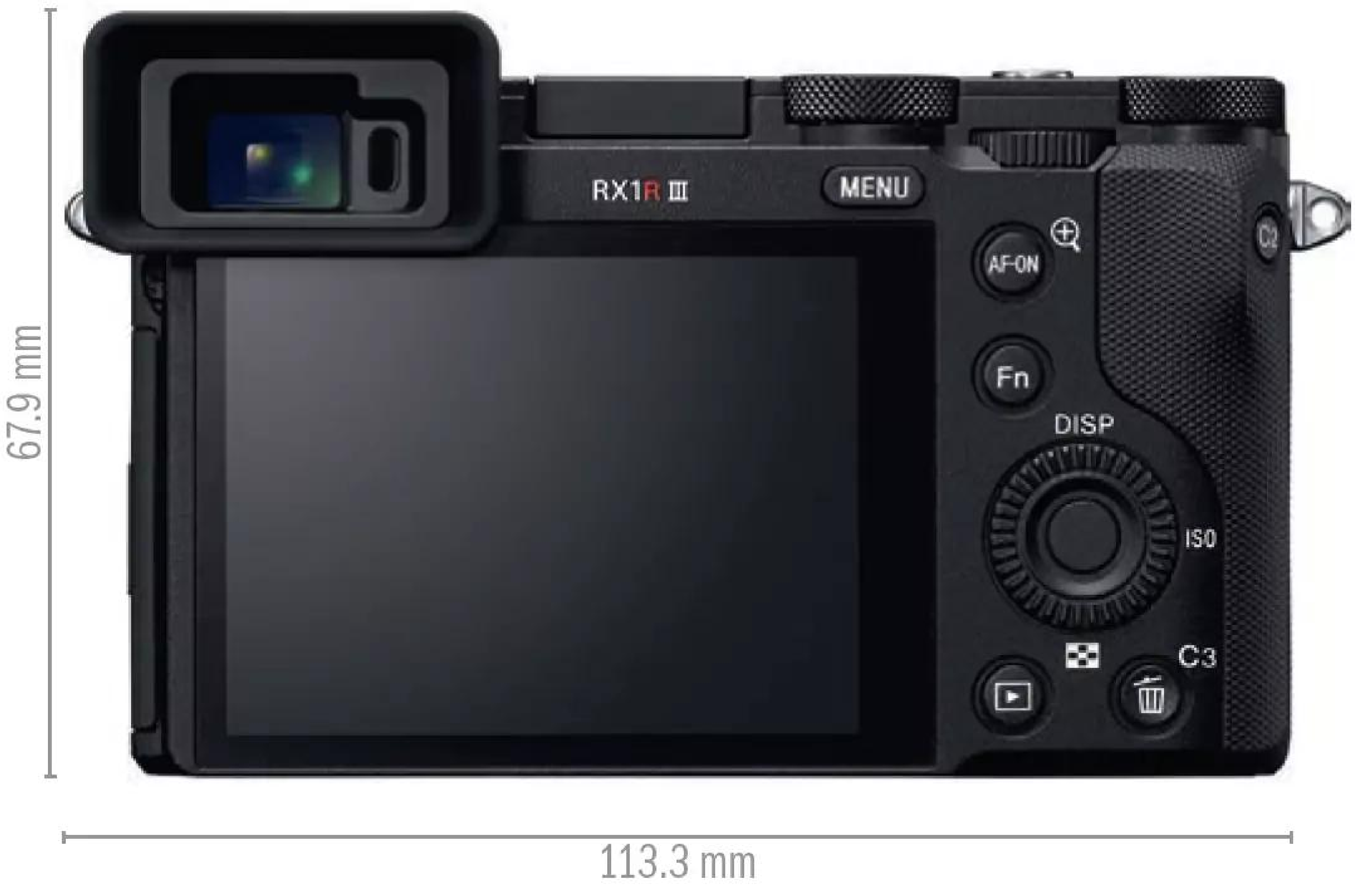
Files are saved to a single SD card slot, which shares the same baseplate compartment as the battery.

Hot shoe

There's no built-in flash, but you can use Sony-dedicated or simple manual units on the hot shoe. It also has connections to use Sony's microphones without a cable.

Accessories

Sony will sell you the LHP-1 lens hood for £169, or the TG-2 thumb grip for £240. Much cheaper third-party substitutes are available.



Autofocus

When it comes to the autofocus system, on paper the RX1R III is very similar to Sony's other cameras. It employs a hybrid phase/contrast detection system, with 693 selectable focus areas that cover almost the entire frame. Unfortunately, though, the focus frame is yet again drawn in Sony's signature grey, which often makes it invisible. You'll probably want to change it to red in the menu if you're interested in seeing what it is you're actually focusing on.

Subject recognition is available, with options for Humans, Animals, Birds, Insects, Cars/ Trains, and Airplanes. An Auto option is included, too, which I'm never going to complain about. The fixed 35mm lens means that much of this is pretty irrelevant, though; you're probably not going to use this camera to photograph such things as wildlife or motorsports. However, many users will be happy to have the option of telling the camera to focus specifically on their friends, family and pets, and even be able to recognise them all at the same time.

In practice, the RX1R III's autofocus performance is mostly limited by the lens. Despite its internal-focus design, it still has to move a lot of glass back and forth over quite a long distance, which inevitably means it's not lightning-fast. But I'd say it's still quick enough for the purposes the camera is most likely to be used for, and most importantly, it's consistently accurate. In side-by-side tests, the RX1R III and X100VI generally autofocus at very similar speeds; however in low light, the Sony can be more decisive and less likely to hunt.

It's lucky that the autofocus is reliable, as I don't like the RX1R III's manual focus experience at all. The focus ring doesn't have a linear response, with the focusing movement being dependent on how fast you rotate it. That leads to a strangely dislocated experience. Manual focus operates with the lens stopped down to the taking aperture, too, so it can be difficult to judge critically when you're shooting at smaller apertures, as everything appears to be in focus.

Performance

Operationally, the Sony RX1R III is a snappy performer. It starts up the moment you flick the power switch and then responds instantly to both the physical controls and the touchscreen. The in-lens shutter means it's almost completely silent, too, so you shouldn't disturb bystanders, even at quiet events.

Unfortunately, though, I've found the battery life to be disappointing. Sony promises 270-300 shots per charge, but I've struggled to get close to that. I've gone out on several occasions, taken a hundred or so frames in an afternoon, and come back with the battery showing close to empty.

The problem here is that the CIPA standard ratings quoted by camera makers represent taking single shots at a time, while turning off the camera in between. But if you leave the RX1R III powered on between shots, even if that's just waiting for the right light, or for someone to walk into the perfect place within your frame, it will chew through batteries at an alarming rate. I'd certainly recommend getting a spare or two. Thankfully, Sony's NP-FW50s have been around a long time and are easy to obtain.

As I said earlier, I don't think the Sony RX1R III is a camera on which continuous shooting matters very much. But for the record, in my tests it met its advertised speed of 5 frames per second, and kept on going for 6 seconds (or 30 frames) when shooting JPEG and compressed raw. Switch to uncompressed raw, and the buffer is halved. But if you want to shoot faster or for longer, you'll probably want a different lens anyway.

Image quality is maintained very well for close-up shooting
Sony RX1R III, 1/125sec at f/11, ISO 4000

Lens optical quality

As for the Zeiss Sonnar 35mm f/2 lens lens, it's been around for a long time, having first been used on the original 24MP RX1 in 2012. But it's stood up pretty well to the subsequent hikes in resolution. Unsurprisingly it's slightly low in contrast wide open, while the edges and corners are just a little blurred if you look up close onscreen. But that doesn't make the images unusable in any way, and much of the time it will be swamped by shallow depth-of-field effects.

Sharpness improves as you stop down, and at its optimum apertures of around f/8-f/11, the lens delivers impressive levels of detail right across the frame.

Sony enables in-camera compensation for chromatic aberration and vignetting by default, and I'd leave them that way. Oddly, though, distortion correction is turned off by default, which results in a noticeable barrel effect. I'd enable it in the menu and then forget about it;

This was shot in the 70mm crop mode
Sony RX1R III, 1/400sec at f/8, ISO 100

then all your straight lines will look correct. All the sample images in this review are corrected for distortion.

Image quality holds up well when you switch to macro mode, too. Out-of-focus backgrounds are rendered with a smooth blur, which remains very attractive as you stop down the aperture. Some green and purple fringing can be visible around high-contrast edges, but it can be suppressed in raw processing if necessary.

Image quality

The RX1R III's 60MP sensor is now very much a known quantity, and provides superlative image quality. It delivers stacks of detail, with huge scope for cropping into your image after shooting or making large prints. This is combined with immense dynamic range, especially at low ISOs, so you can manipulate the exposure and tonality sliders in your raw processing program pretty much as far as you like, without having to worry about noise.

Its high-ISO image quality is excellent, too, with barely any visible noise up to ISO 1600. I'd still be quite happy shooting at up to ISO 12,800, or even ISO 25,600 at a push. This becomes more important on the RX1R III compared to the likes of the A7R V and A7CR, because in the absence of image stabilisation, you'll need to keep shutter speeds high if you want to avoid any blurring due to camera shake.

On this note, if you use Auto ISO in aperture priority mode, then by default it maintains a minimum shutter speed of 1/125sec. This may sound high, but I think it's actually a good choice, as it suppresses both shake and subject motion blur very effectively. But it does mean hiking the ISO in low light. With static subjects I was able to get sharp shots hand-held at 1/13sec, but I wouldn't want to drop much slower.

Sony's auto white balance is extremely reliable, which means out-of-camera colour looks right. I also rarely felt much need to correct it in raw processing. Meanwhile, the standard Multi metering pattern does a good job of avoiding clipping highlight detail. Having said that, I also found that it consistently exposed a little darker than I'd like when there were no bright highlights to protect. That's not a problem when you're shooting in raw, but it can make out-of-camera JPEG (or HEIF) files look a little dull.

I don't find Sony's in-camera colour processing to be especially inspiring, either, with the Standard look being quite muted. I spent more time shooting in Vivid, although personally, I'd reduce the contrast and saturation a little. Either way, there's plenty of options here for tuning the colour to your liking. But if JPEG colour is really important to you, I think Fujifilm does it much better – this is a camera for shooting in raw.

Verdict

Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended ★★★★

ON PAPER, the Sony RX1R III should be a fabulous camera. It's small, has some nice photographer-friendly controls, and promises superlative image quality from the highest resolution full-frame sensor around. If, like me, you're a fan of the Fujifilm X100VI, then getting even better image quality in a smaller camera should be a no-brainer.

And let's be clear about one thing – the RX1R III's image quality is superb. The sensor delivers huge levels of detail and impressive dynamic range, while also performing well at high ISOs. The lens is sharp enough at large apertures, with attractive bokeh, and gets really sharp from corner to corner when stopped down. Autofocus is respectably fast, too, while subject recognition works well for such things as portraits.

The problem, though, lies with all the useful features that Sony has left out in the process of making that body as small as possible. No image stabilisation. No tilting screen. No weather-sealing. No joystick. No ND filter in the lens. I would, in all honesty, much prefer a larger, better-featured camera with a less-cramped grip and controls. It's not as if the RX1R III's small body brings any great portability advantage, given the size of the lens.

Ultimately, the biggest problem facing the RX1R III is the fact that it costs more than twice as much as the Fujifilm X100VI, but it lacks key features in comparison and simply isn't as nice to use. And the thing is, the X100VI has image quality to burn, too. Undoubtedly, some buyers will be willing to overlook all this just to get a 60MP full-frame sensor in such a small camera. But I can't see it myself.

FEATURES	8/10
BUILD & HANDLING	7/10
METERING	8/10
AUTOFOCUS	8/10
AWB & COLOUR	8/10
DYNAMIC RANGE	9/10
IMAGE QUALITY	9/10
VIEWFINDER/LCD	7/10

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Canon's 85mm f/1.4 is a great choice for photographing people
Canon EOS R5 Mark II, 1/160sec at f/3.2, ISO 100

Canon RF 85mm F1.4L VCM

This hybrid prime rounds out a series that includes 20mm, 24mm, 35mm and 50mm optics. **Angela Nicholson** investigates if it's the perfect portrait lens

The Canon RF 85mm F1.4L VCM is a short telephoto prime lens designed for Canon's RF-mount full-frame mirrorless cameras. It's the fifth addition to Canon's hybrid prime lens line-up, which is designed to work equally well for stills photography and video. As well as sharing the same maximum aperture, these lenses are unified by a consistent size and shape, making them well-suited to rig or gimbal-based shooting.

Naturally, its focal length makes the RF 85mm F1.4L VCM an attractive choice for portrait photography. But it can also be used for a wide range of subjects, while its large maximum aperture opens up some opportunity for creative use of depth-of-field. At £1,679.99, its price is in line with this kind of pro-spec prime.

Features

The optical design of the RF 85mm F1.4L VCM comprises 14 elements arranged in 10 groups, with one Ultra-low Dispersion (UD) element and one glass-moulded (GMo) aspherical element. These are employed to control chromatic aberration and distortion, ensuring good sharpness across the frame. Canon's Air Sphere Coating (ASC) is also applied to suppress flare and ghosting, especially in challenging backlit scenes. Meanwhile, the front element has a fluorine coating to resist water, oil and fingerprints.

The large aperture lends itself well to creative depth-of-field effects
Canon EOS R5 Mark II, 1/8000sec at f/3.5, ISO 100

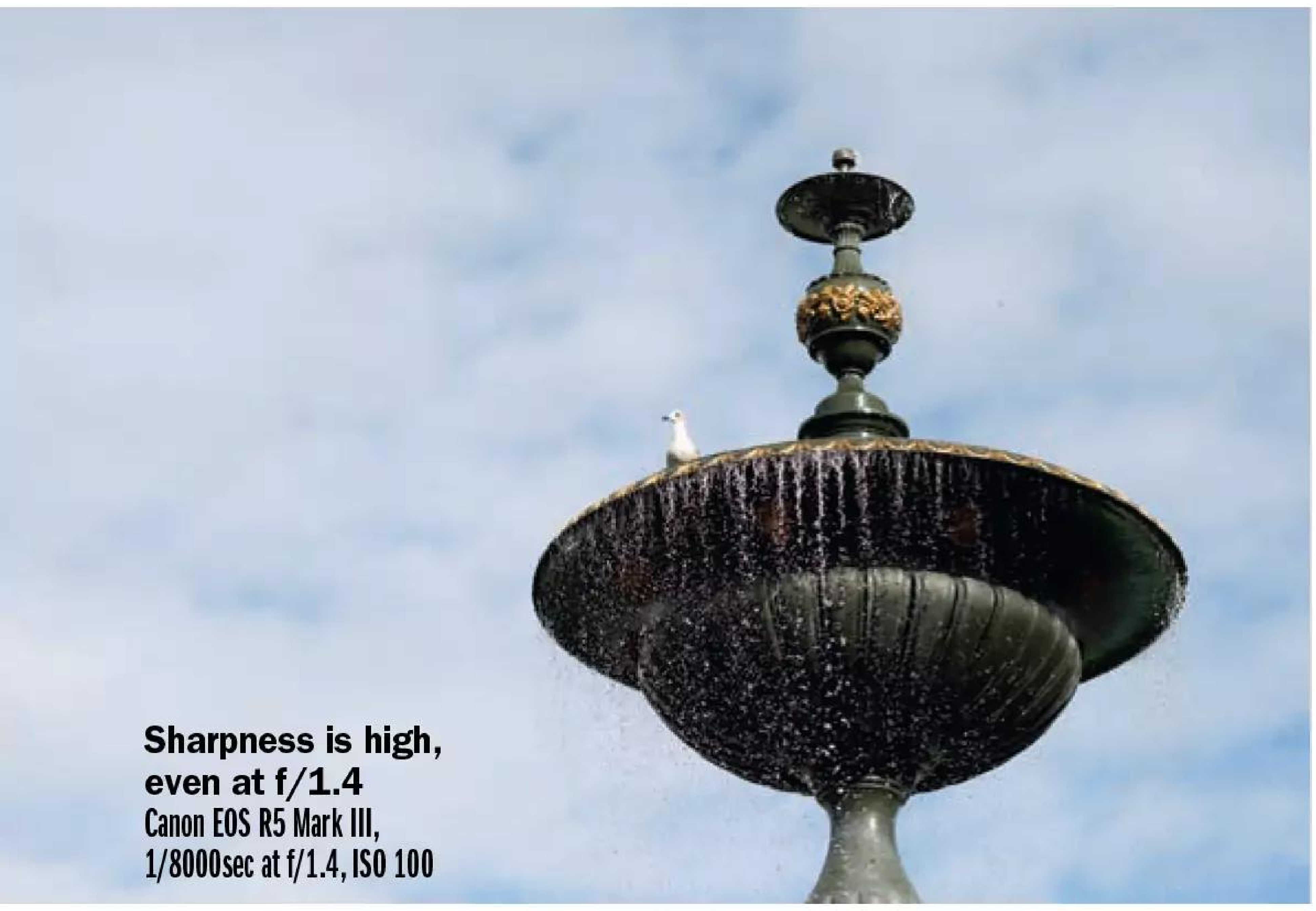
With an f/1.4 maximum aperture and an 11-blade diaphragm, this lens is clearly aimed at those who want to isolate their subject and see attractive background blur. It's particularly well-suited to portraiture but also works well for creative storytelling, especially in low-light situations where wide apertures help avoid pushing the ISO setting too high.

The autofocusing is driven by a Voice Coil Motor (VCM) that's designed to deliver quiet and smooth performance. Canon has also worked to suppress focus breathing, which helps maintain consistent framing during focus transitions. These features are particularly useful for video, but they are also of use to photographers.

There is a stepless aperture ring, which can be used in both video and stills modes, although stills functionality is limited to Canon bodies released from 2024 onwards. The ring cannot be set to operate with clicks, as there's no switch to enable this. That's disappointing for those such as me who like to keep a tactile track on the extent of aperture adjustment.

The lens also includes a customisable function button and a control ring, which can also be customised and features subtle click stops that can only be 'de-clicked' by a trip to a service agent.

The minimum focus distance is 0.75m, with a maximum magnification of 0.12x. While not a macro lens by any stretch, this is perfectly adequate for general portrait and lifestyle shooting.



Sharpness is high, even at f/1.4
Canon EOS R5 Mark III, 1/8000sec at f/1.4, ISO 100

Build and handling

Physically, the Canon RF 85mm F1.4L VCM mirrors the other hybrid primes in the series, with a barrel design that accepts 67mm filters and has the same overall profile. Measuring 99.3mm in length and 76.5mm in diameter, it's relatively compact given its focal length and aperture. And while at 636g, it's the heaviest in Canon's F1.4 VCM hybrid lens series, it's still almost half the weight of Canon's RF 85mm F1.2L USM lens. This makes it a more practical choice for extended handheld use, particularly at events such as weddings, where freedom of movement is essential. Its price is also almost half that of the F1.2 lens, making it much more accessible. But it's still a carefully considered expense for enthusiast users who might want to contemplate the Canon RF 85mm f2 IS Macro STM (£669.99) instead.

The lens has a robust feel in the hand, with Canon's L-series weather-sealing ensuring it can withstand outdoor use in unpredictable conditions. The knurled control ring sits at the front of the barrel, followed by the manual focus ring towards the mid-point. The iris lock switch, function button and AF/MF switch sit between the focus ring and the stepless aperture ring that's close to the mount.

In use, the lens feels well-balanced on a body like the EOS R5 Mark II. I find the natural resting place for my left hand is to the rear of the focus ring, which means it and the iris lock,

Out-of-focus areas are rendered very attractively
Canon EOS R5 Mark II, 1/2000sec at f/1.4, ISO 100

AF/MF switch and function buttons are all within convenient reach. In addition, the aperture ring is easy to find because it's very close to the camera mount, while the clicking control ring is just as easy to locate as it's at the opposite end of the lens.

The manual focus movement is smooth, making it easy to control whether you're shooting stills or video with focus pulls.

Although I appreciate having an aperture ring, and the fact it works in stills mode as well as video (not a given with Canon), I find myself glancing at the viewfinder display more frequently to check settings than I would with a ring that clicks. A switchable click mechanism would have been a nice addition, particularly for stills users, but that would be a departure from the rest of the lens series.

Autofocus

In combination with the Canon EOS R5 Mark II, the RF 85mm F1.4L VCM's autofocusing is quick and accurate. It works well with Canon's subject detection and eye-detection systems, which is crucial when shooting portraits wide open, where the depth of field is extremely shallow.

The autofocusing motor is virtually silent, which makes the lens ideal for use in quiet environments or when recording video. Even during subject tracking, the focus shifts smoothly and reliably. I found that it was able to lock focus quickly and keep up with moving subjects without a problem. The system only becomes mildly hesitant when working at or near the minimum focus distance, which is common behaviour for lenses in this class.

Focus breathing is controlled effectively. Although a very small change can be seen in the framing when making extreme focus adjustments, it's unlikely to be an issue in real-world use, especially for photographers.

Image quality

The Canon RF 85mm F1.4L VCM delivers excellent results across the board. At its widest aperture, f/1.4, the lens is impressively sharp in the centre, with the sharpness only reducing in the extreme corners. This sharpness improves as the aperture is stopped down, reaching peak performance at around f/4.

The automatic lens profiles applied by in-camera processing or software such as Lightroom and Adobe Camera Raw effectively correct the corner shading that would be visible when shooting wide open. Stopping down to f/4 naturally reduces vignetting without any help from the corrections.

With the profile corrections disabled, the lens shows a slight degree of pincushion distortion. However, this is handled well by the correction profiles and is unlikely to be visible in most images.

Chromatic aberration is also minimal with the RF 85mm F1.4L VCM. I spotted a small amount of fringing along some very high-contrast edges, when examining images at 100%, but it's not problematic and is easily removed in post-processing.

Flare is also very well controlled. It only appears in some of the images I captured when shooting directly into the sun or another strong light source and even then, it's kept to a minimum. Canon's coatings appear to be very effective.

Crucially for a portrait lens, out-of-focus areas are rendered attractively, with smooth bokeh that avoids distracting artefacts. Small highlights remain round across most of the frame, with only mild cat's-eye distortion visible at the edges. There is a subtle onion ring structure within the bokeh and some 'soap bubble' effect at the edges, but the effect is gentle and adds a touch of character.

Verdict

THE CANON RF 85mm F1.4L VCM is an excellent addition to the RF lens line-up, offering a strong blend of features for both photography and video. It strikes a practical balance between the compact and more affordable RF 85mm f/2 and the significantly larger and more expensive RF 85mm f/1.2. With a fast f/1.4 maximum aperture and features such as quiet focusing, suppressed focus breathing, an aperture ring and consistent design with the rest of Canon's VCM primes, it's a compelling option for photographers, hybrid shooters and videographers.

This lens is clearly geared towards professionals or advanced enthusiasts who need high optical performance without the size, weight and cost penalties associated with faster lenses. Portrait, wedding and event photographers in particular will appreciate its combination of speed, portability and image quality, as well as it's more palatable price.

Its few drawbacks, namely the lack of optical stabilisation and the inability to enable click stops on the aperture ring or de-click the control ring, are unlikely to be deal-breakers for most users, especially considering the lens's strengths. While it carries a premium price, it feels well justified by the results it delivers and the build quality on offer.

Data file

Price: £1,679.99
Filter diameter: 67mm
Lens elements: 14
Groups: 10
Diaphragm blades: 11
Aperture: f/1.4-16
Min focus: 0.75m
Length: 99.3mm
Diameter: 76.5mm
Weight: 636g
Lens mount: Canon RF
Included accessories: Caps, hood

Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended ★★★★½

SmallRig L-Shaped Mount Plate for Fujifilm X-E5

Angela Nicholson tests a custom-fit plate that enhances the grip for the Fujifilm X-E5

● £37.90 ● smallrig.com

SmallRig seems to have taken up the mantle of supplying many of the accessories that camera manufacturers used to produce themselves, and this 'L-shaped Mount Plate with Silicone Grip' is a great example of a well-thought-out optional add-on. Designed specifically for the Fujifilm X-E5, it provides a noticeable improvement in handling, without interfering with the camera's core functionality or compact design.

The grip attaches securely to the base of the camera via the tripod bush, with the black silicone having a similar (if finer) texture and tone to the body's original covering. I used the silver version, and the aluminium alloy blends perfectly with the camera's silver top and base plates. It really feels like a natural extension of the camera.

Despite being labelled as L-shaped, this isn't a traditional L-bracket with a side-arm for vertical mounting. The vertical section is the silicone grip, while the base is solid and Arca-Swiss compatible, so it snaps easily into tripod heads from the likes of 3 Legged Thing, Benro and Peak Design. It's ideal for photographers who frequently switch between hand-held and tripod work, as there's no need to attach a separate quick-release plate. However, should your tripod head not be Arca-Swiss type, there are two 1/4in sockets for a plate.

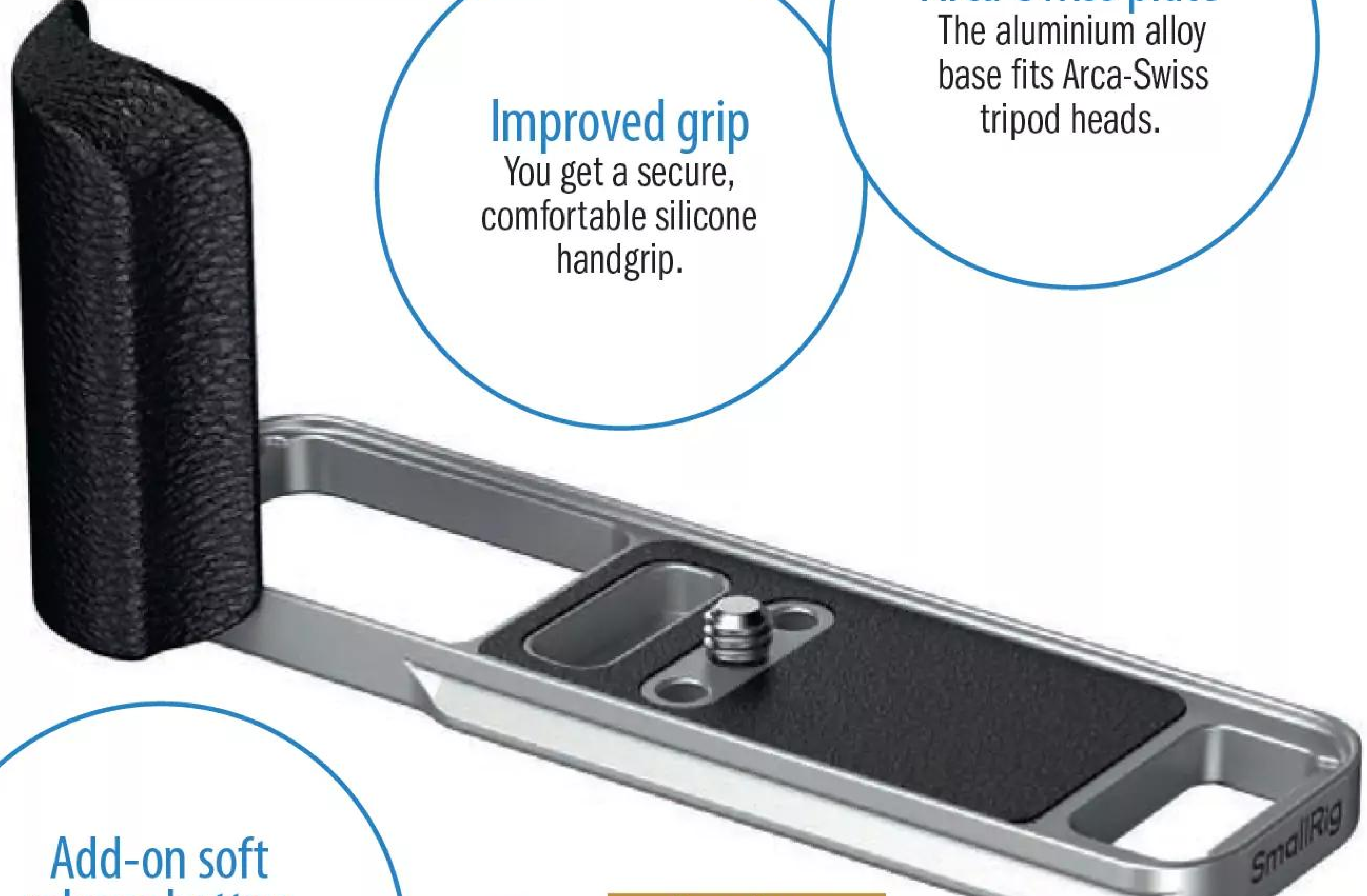
The grip is more substantial than the camera's own, giving you a more secure hold, particularly when shooting one-handed or working with longer lenses. It makes the X-E5 feel that bit more reassuring in your hand, yet the whole unit is very discreet, making it a real asset for travel, street and casual everyday photography.

Crucially, the grip/plate doesn't block anything important. You still have full access to the battery compartment, memory card slot, ports, buttons and all the camera's controls. At just 64g, it adds next to no weight to your setup, either.

Verdict

This isn't a flashy accessory, but it is a really useful one at a great price. It improves grip, adds Arca-Swiss compatibility and fits the Fujifilm X-E5 like a glove. While it doesn't support vertical tripod mounting, it's well-designed, great value and a worthwhile upgrade for any X-E5 owner. It's also so light and discreet that, aside from the additional functionality it brings, I forget it's on the camera.

ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE STREET PRICES

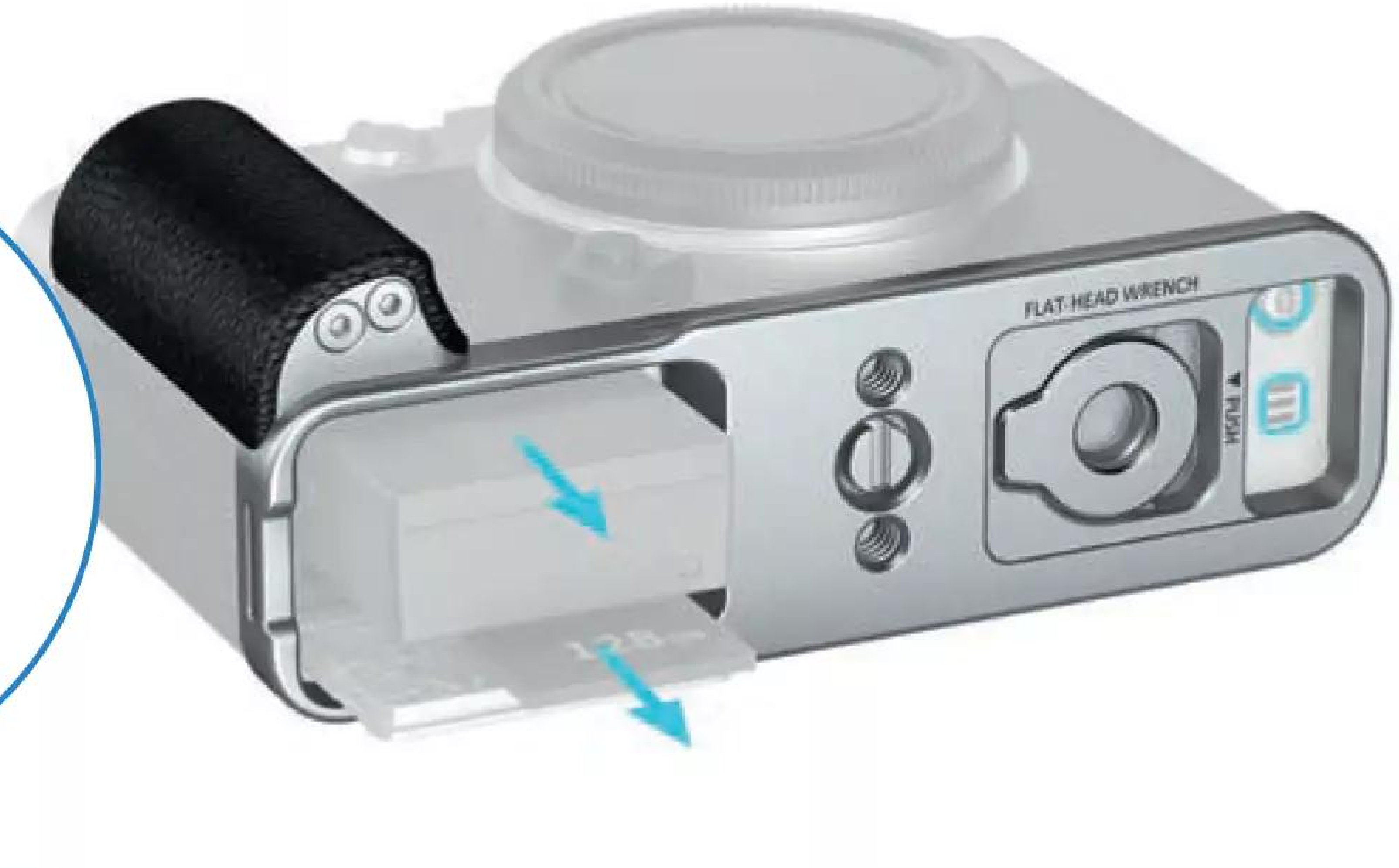


Arca-Swiss plate
The aluminium alloy base fits Arca-Swiss tripod heads.

Improved grip
You get a secure, comfortable silicone handgrip.

Add-on soft release button
The package includes a soft-touch shutter release button.

Amateur Photographer Testbench GOLD ★★★★★



Magnetic tool
There's a flat-head screwdriver held magnetically in the base.

At a glance

- Bespoke-fit L-shaped grip
- Arca-Swiss compatible base
- Just 64g weight
- Aluminium alloy and silicone construction
- Provides full access to battery and ports

FINISH OPTIONS

Just like the X-E5, the SmallRig mount plate is available in two colourways – black (ID 5448, right) and silver (ID 5447), so you can match your grip to your X-E5's body finish. Both have the same solid aluminium base and soft silicone grip.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Purma Speed

John Wade reviews a strangely eccentric British-made camera

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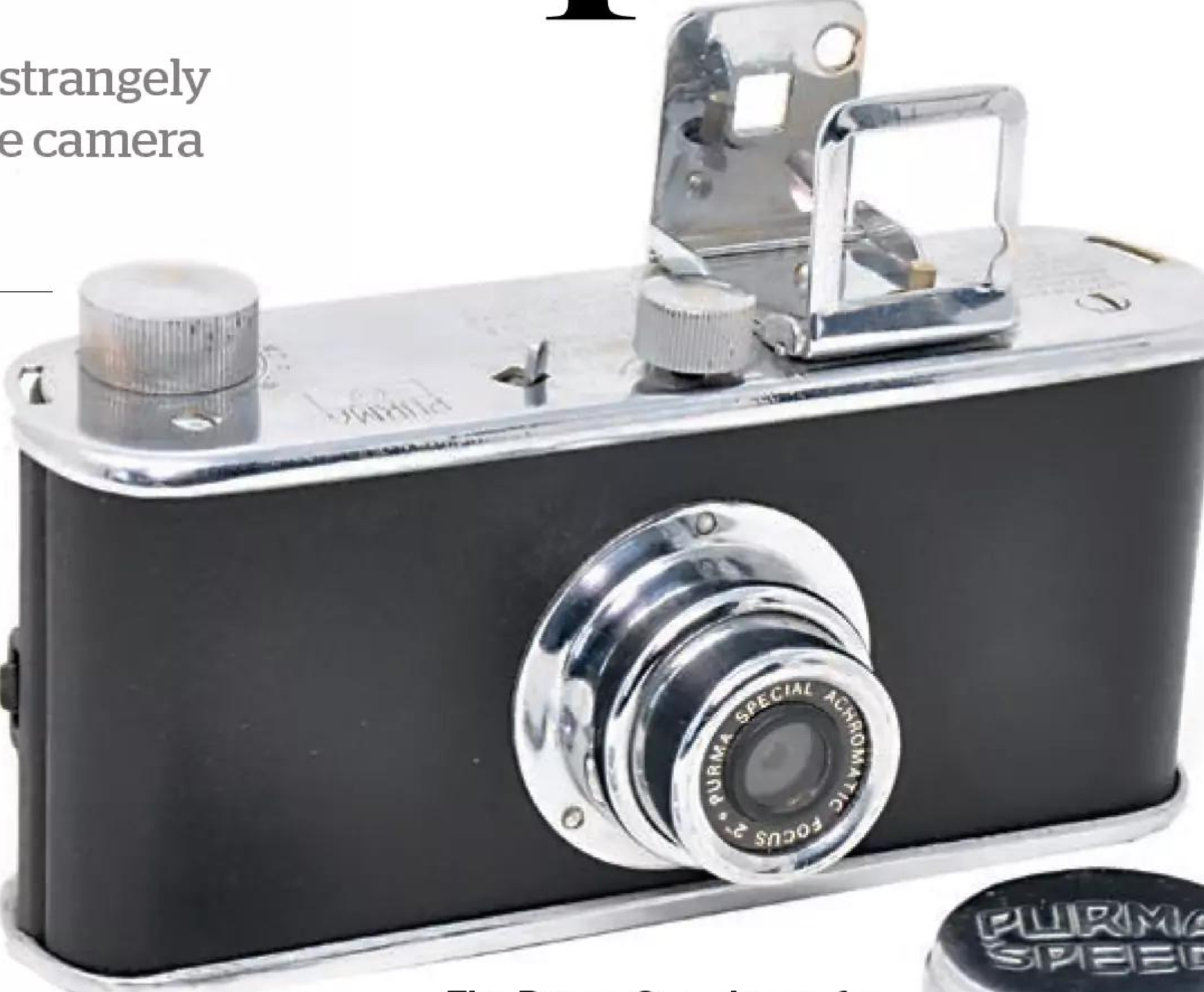


The Purma Speed: rare for using a gravity shutter

The common practice among camera manufacturers has always been to improve the specifications of their cameras with each new model introduced. Purma did things differently. The firm started with its best model and followed it with two others featuring more meagre specs.

With a body made entirely of metal in black with highly polished chrome, the Purma Speed presents a sleek, streamlined look with minimal controls. The eye-level viewfinder unfolds from the top plate, revealing the shutter release button beneath. There's a wind knob for the film and another smaller knob, which is essential to the camera's operation and distinguishes Purma cameras from all others. That's because it controls the camera's somewhat weird gravity shutter.

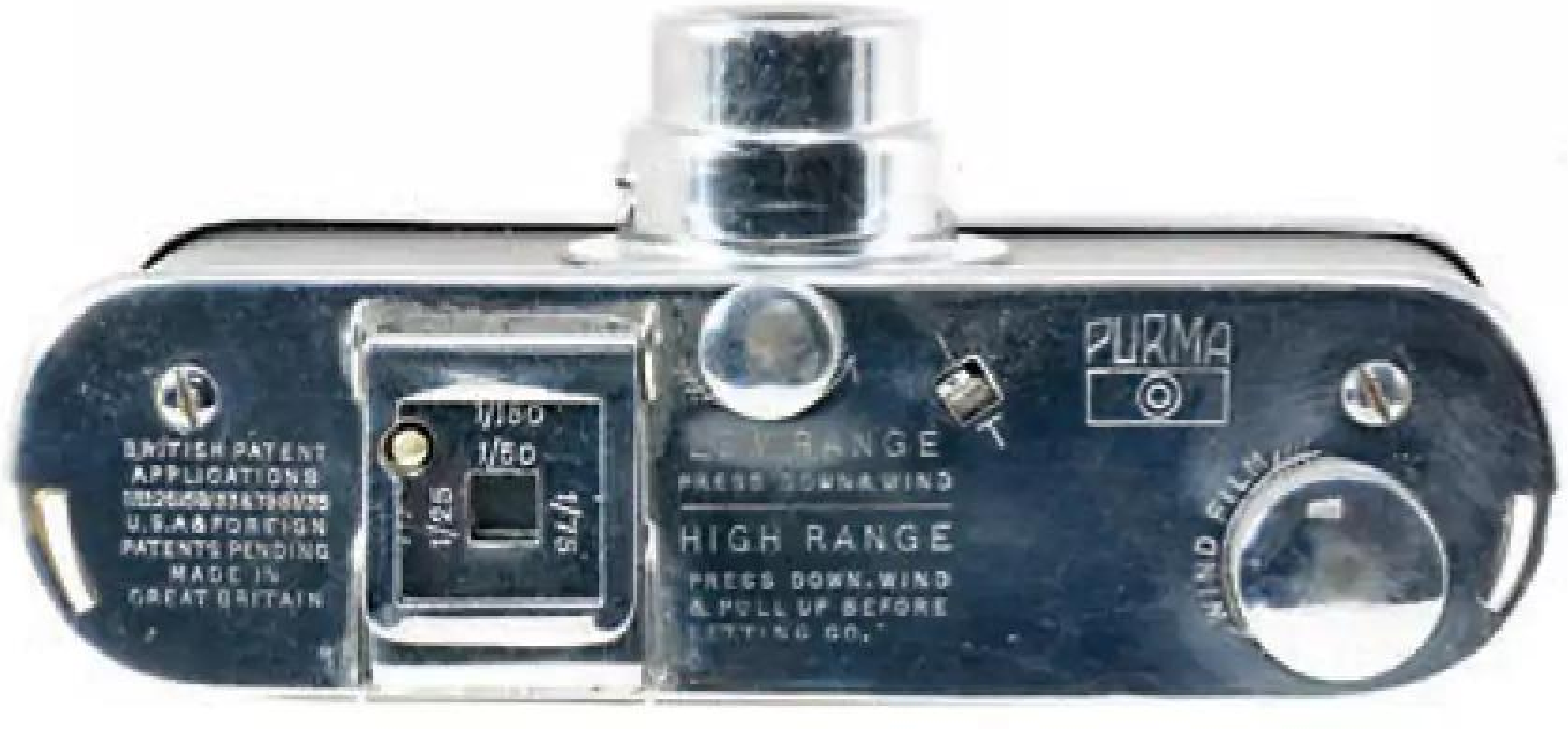
It's a focal plane shutter, unusual in that it incorporates a weight on one of its blinds. Tension the shutter by turning that knob on the top plate, hold the camera horizontally and the shutter fires at 1/50sec. Turn the camera vertically one way and the weight assists the shutter to move faster to give 1/75sec. Hold it vertically the other way, and the weight restricts the shutter, slowing it down to about 1/25sec.

This unusual method of setting shutter speeds continued in the next two cameras that followed. But unlike those, the Purma Speed adds an extra three speeds when the shutter tensioning knob is pushed down as it is turned, then released. This narrows the slit between the shutter blinds, resulting in three new speeds of 1/150sec, 1/200sec and 1/100sec.

The shutter is locked when the lens cap is in place. Removing the cap causes the fixed focus f/6.3 lens to leap forward, ready for action. The Purma takes 127 film, using twin red windows into which film numbers are wound alternately to produce 16 32x32mm square pictures. It was the company's first camera, the best and also, today, the rarest.

What's good Simple to use, innovative design, visually attractive.

What's bad No aperture or focus controls, 127 film difficult to obtain.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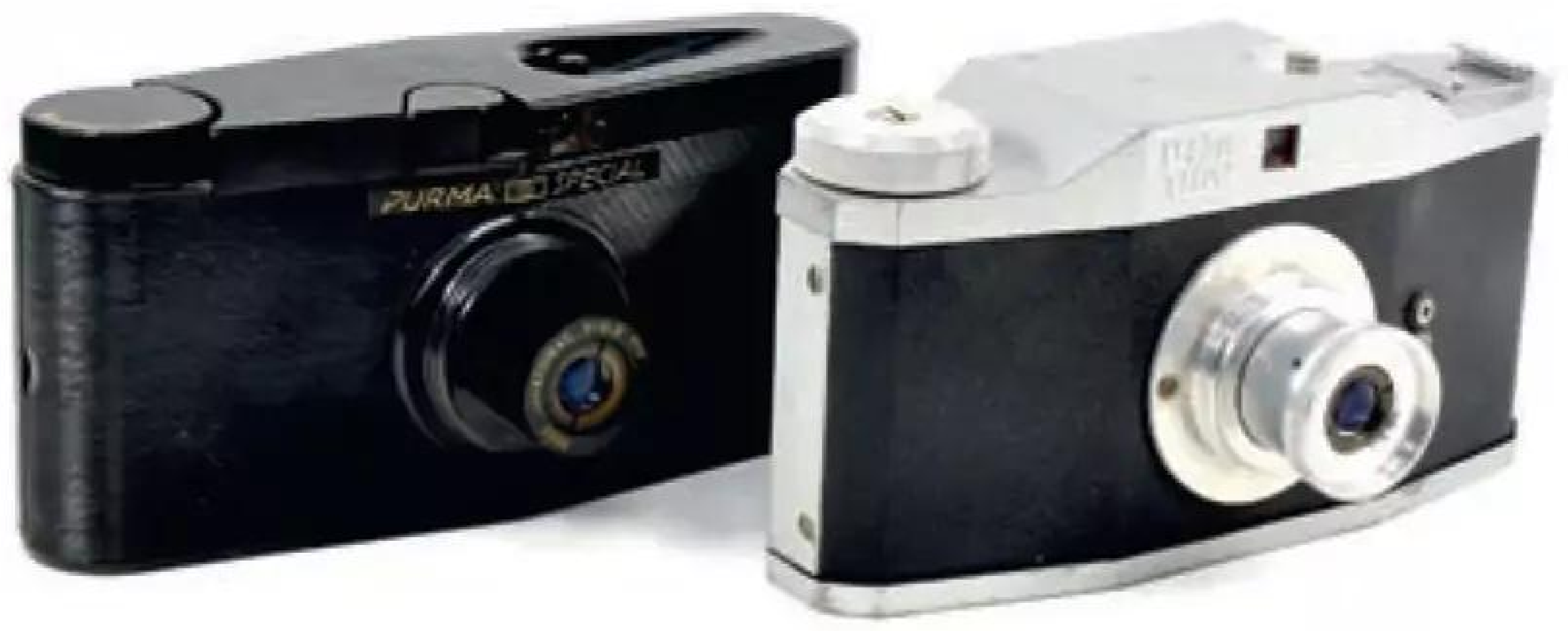
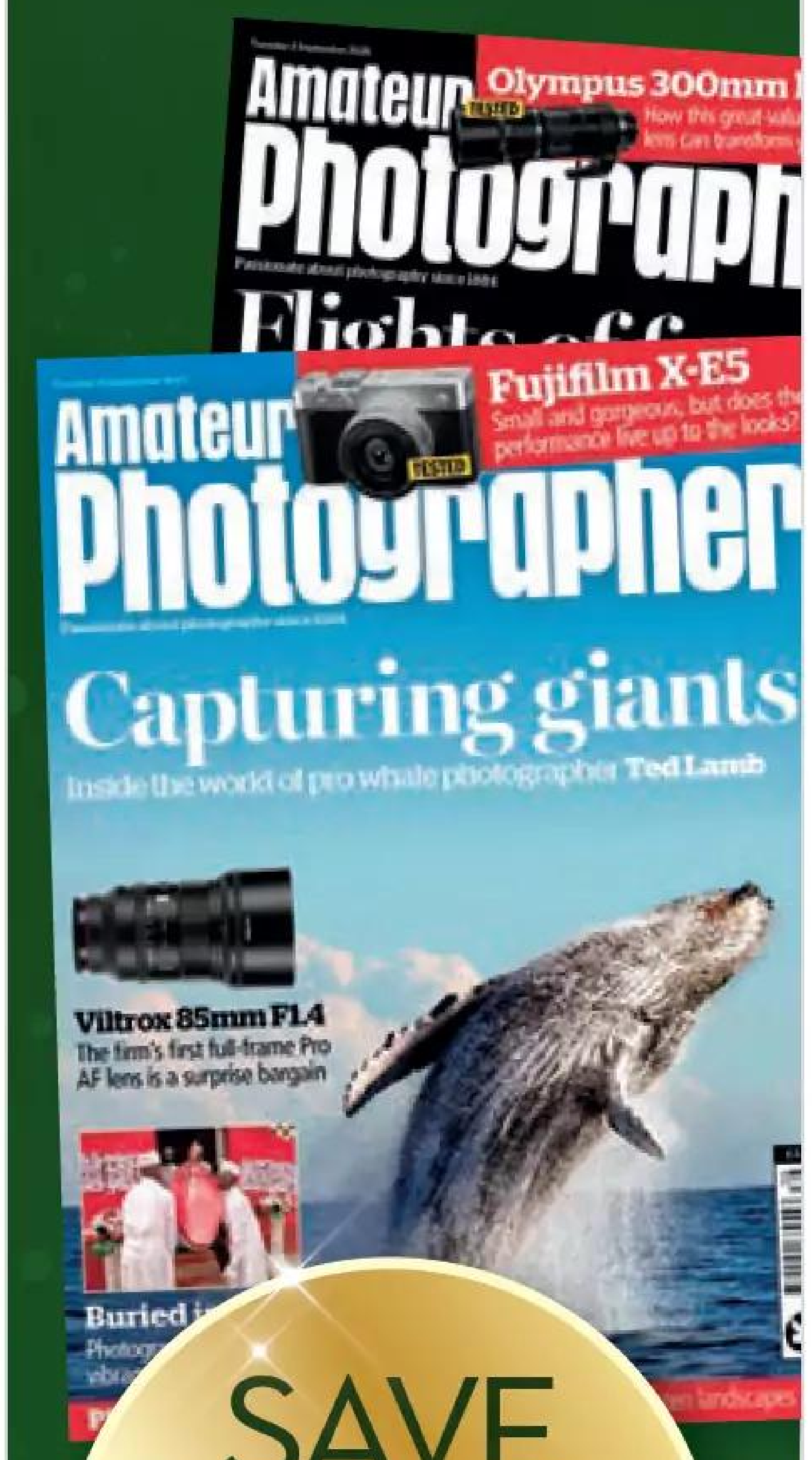
U.S.A.& FOREIGN PATENTS PENDING
MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN
1/150
1/50
1/25
1/75
LOW RANGE
PRESS DOWN & WIND
HIGH RANGE
PRESS DOWN, WIND & PULL UP BEFORE LETTING GO.
PURMA
WIND FILM

The neat (and slightly scratched) top plate of the camera adds engraved instructions on how to use the shutter



The cameras that followed: the Purma Special (left) and Purma Plus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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Dynamic tagging

After reading your article online about features that cameras should have but don't, I thought I'd add one of my own: Dynamic tagging.

I believe there is a process that would allow photographers to take greater control over their images at the most critical time. I propose that the photographer could be given the means to add tags to the metadata at the point of capture. This would be achieved by voice to text technology so that the photographer would not interrupt the shoot or take his attention away from the subject.

In its simplest form the photographer could press a pre-programmed key on their camera to directly write the spoken tags, or keywords, into the metadata. It might describe a variable feature that would not be included in the metadata automatically, as is the case with copyright, exposure, GPS etc. The perfect moment for this would be during the seconds that the image is shown on the camera monitor screen, and the duration for this is already under the photographer's control.

At the moment I can open the metadata of an image on my PC and place a cursor in the tag/keyword box and dictate a series of tags, thereby making that image readily locatable in any digital storage location, with or even without specialist software. But this is post-processing and is tedious at best, and requires photographers to spend more time doing 'admin'.

Douglas Fairbank

Joshua Waller, Online Editor, replies: Great idea – there are a small number of cameras that let you record audio notes to go with your photo, but they are few and far between: look for the Voice memo feature. With modern technology (and enough processing power) auto audio to text should be possible, as it's certainly a feature of many phones.

LETTER OF THE WEEK WINS A SAMSUNG 256GB PRO PLUS MICRO SDXC CARD. NOTE: PRIZE APPLIES TO UK RESIDENTS ONLY

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A call for compatibility

The versatile Godox iT32 flashgun

Over the past 18 months I have purchased a Panasonic, Fuji and Sony camera. I have also had to purchase a compatible flash for each. Why on earth can I not use one flash on three systems? I don't want to have to buy a cheap generic flash and use in manual mode. The same thing applies to batteries and chargers.

There has been a shift away from phone chargers using different charging connections, and now we all use USB-C; how convenient is that? Why can't camera makers do something similar?

I understand about innovation and also manufacturers wanting to do their own thing, thinking theirs is the best. But they said that about USB connections and it all worked out okay.

If we are to be environmentally responsible, we should standardise where possible and save the planet's resources, as well as the coins in our pockets (does anyone else still carry them?). Is it time for governments to step in and legislate for compatibility and multiple use, not just on cameras, but across the board, or do the industry leaders need to step up?

Rick Corbishley

It's probably too late to tell you about the new Godox IT32 TTL flashgun which features interchangeable hotshoes that also double as TTL wireless triggers. Not only can you have a compatible hotshoe on each of your cameras, you can detach the flashgun and the hotshoe will fire it remotely. They will be available early next year.

Festival of Photography

Your next Festival of Photography looks great but again I have to ask, are there any plans to do any of these events outside of London?

Roger Samuels

Yes, we are currently in talks with two venues in different regions of the UK, and will announce details as soon as they're confirmed.

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THIS WEEK WE ASKED...

What's your process for selecting and editing your best shots?

You said...

Al Blair
Process of elimination. Get rid of obvious bad ones. Once I've got my shot list I look at eye sharpness and take it from there.

Steve Walker
Save the raw and jpgs to a folder labelled with location and, if necessary, date. Group images by type. Look through all the jpgs using a Windows browser, and edit the raws of the good ones in DxO PhotoLab, outputting to high-res and/or low-res sunflowers as needed.

Derek Smith
I check technical quality and delete if the image is not otherwise remarkable or salvageable. Next is rating and keywords. I've found that I know almost instantly whether one is worth keeping. I only wish I had the confidence to believe in my instincts.

Hugh Maxwell Photography
I normally view them as medium-sized thumbnails in Photoshop and select the ones that 'speak' to me the most. I'm looking for the image which has best captured the moment or atmosphere of the location. I will then check if it's technically sound during processing/editing.

Yiannis Anastasiou
I tend to just leave them to sit on the drive for more than a month (sometimes more than a year if I have doubts), before I decide which are the best shots from a session.

Richard Williams
Is it interesting, either to me, or anyone else. If I don't think it is, then I delete.

Adrian Wyatt
I keep them all. Some of my best work I nearly ditched.

Stuart G @Guts_57U_SEUK
Usually if out shooting with my main photo wander buddy, I show him the shots I like. If he likes them too then it goes through to edit or just jpeg from camera if using 'mono filter'. We judge each other's shots as: yeah yeah (okay, nothing special) or banger (good one). Obviously, I still have shots that I like that buddy doesn't, and I still do my thing with them… But two likes is still a better gauge than one.

Richard Napthen
Keep it basic because that's my editing skill level.

Share your photos and comments with us on social!
See page 3 for how to contact us

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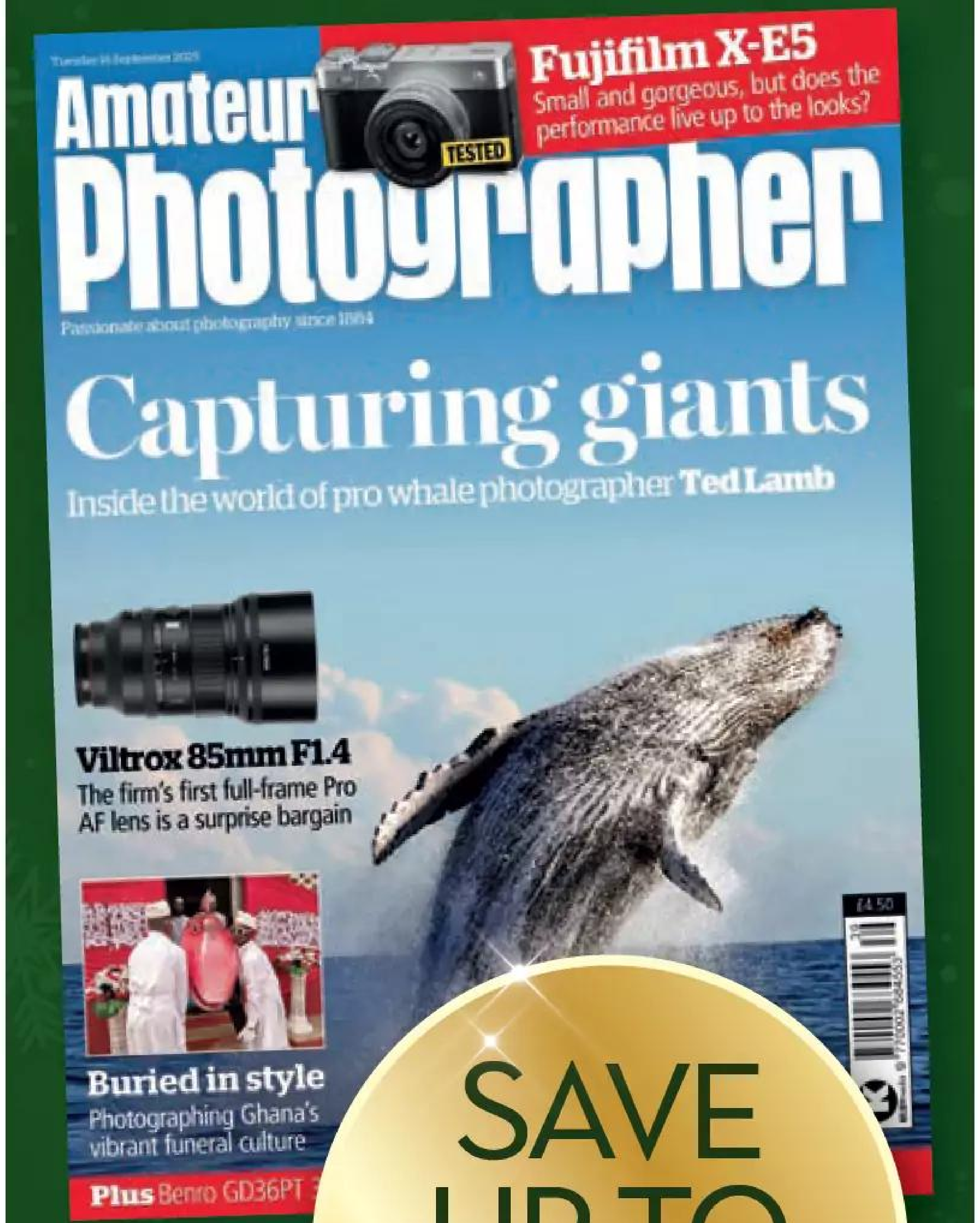

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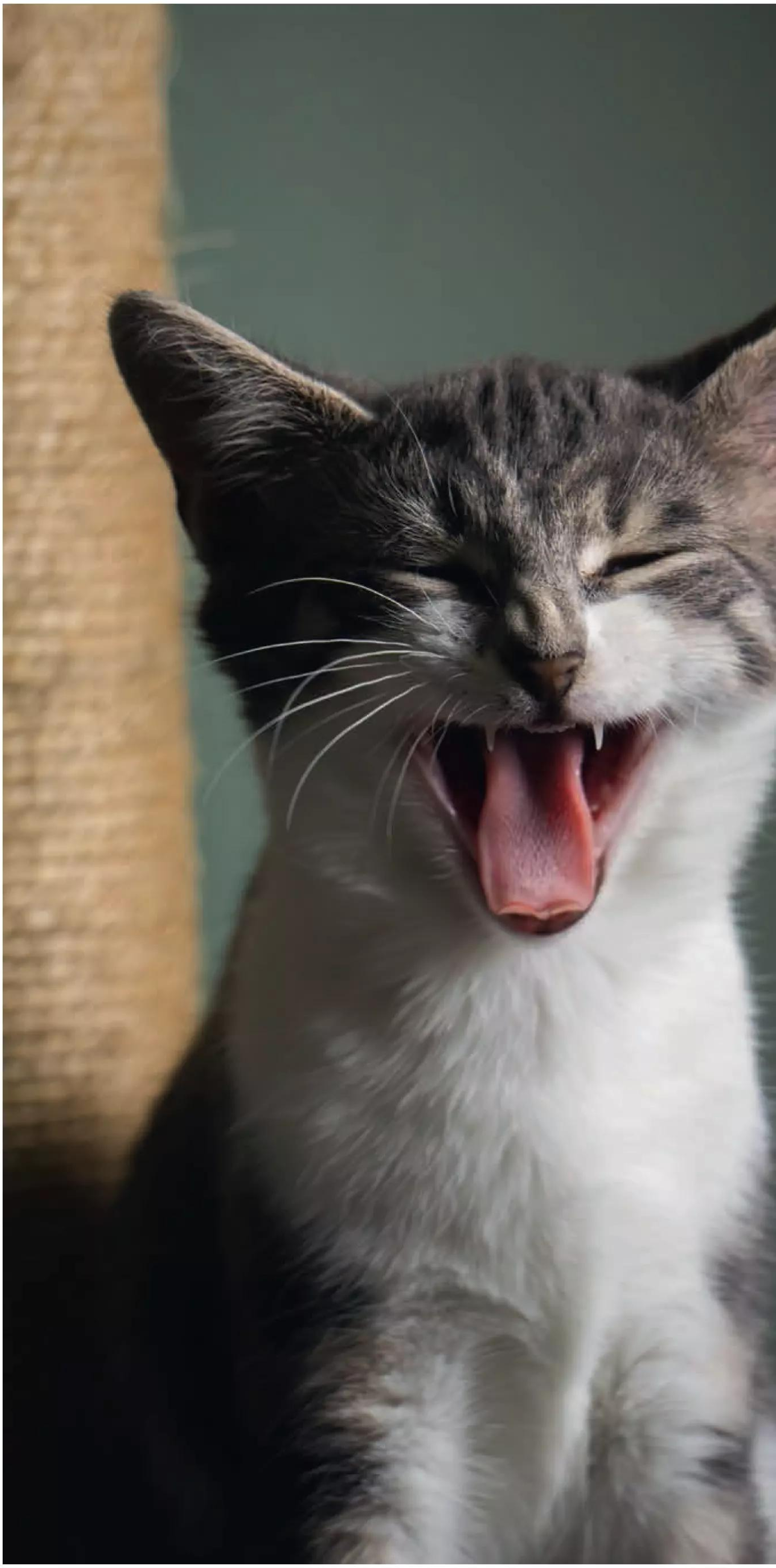
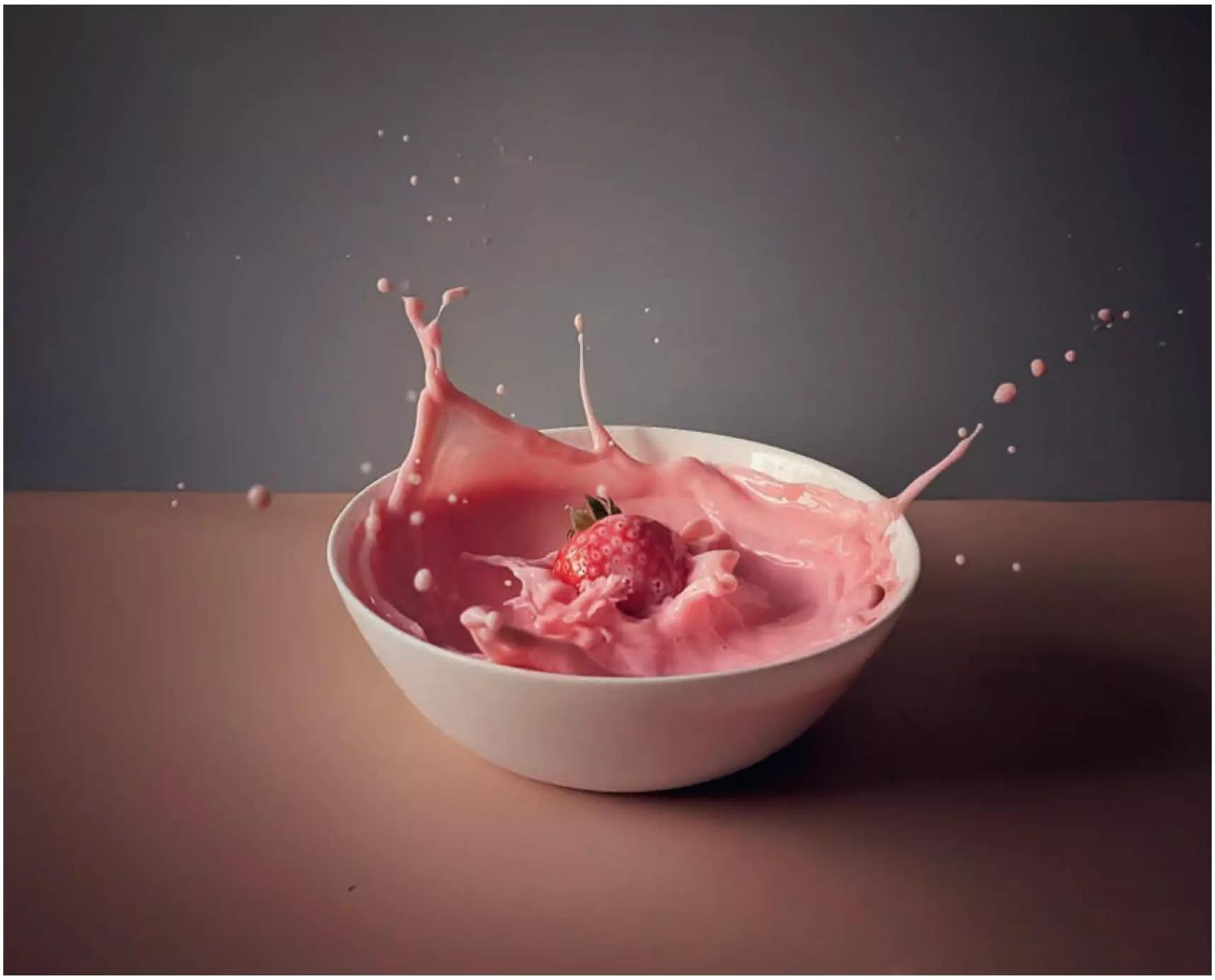


Formerly Feral
by Chris Kinch

Sony A6000, Sony E 55-210mm F4.5-6.3 OSS, 1/60sec at f/6.3, ISO 3200, at 158mm

'Nona was a feral kitten we took in as a foster. She's now very cuddly, but don't tell her I said so! As a skittish kitten, it was tricky keeping her high up in the cat tree for any amount of time. Eventually she settled in the light and gave me this huge yawn!'

Instagram: @LonelyKoiCamera

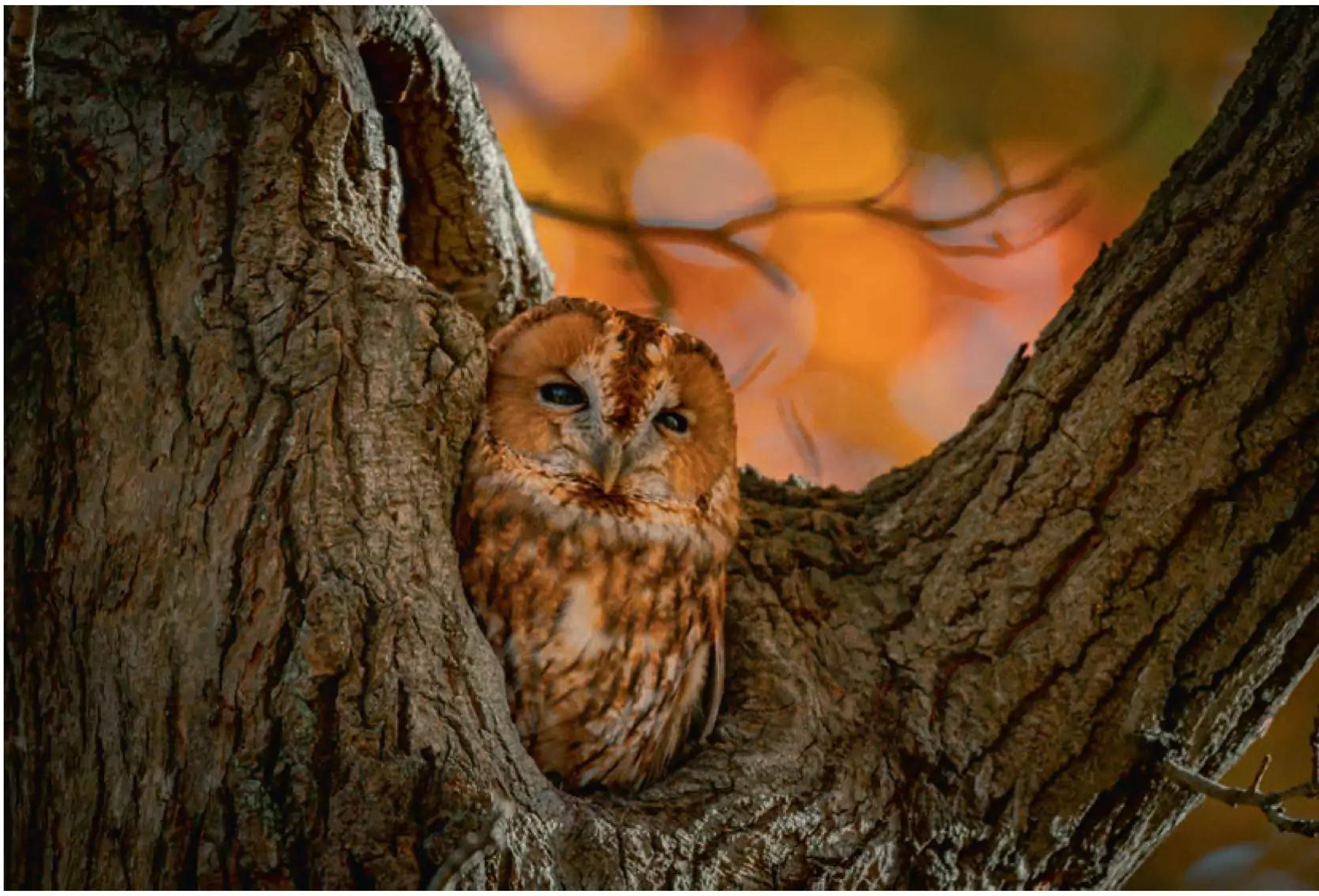


Strawberry Milkshake Splash
by Jane Jones

Google Pixel 9, 1/1072sec at f/1.7, ISO 953

'I'm into a variety of photography. I'm very proud of myself this year – achieving in exhibitions, featuring in a local calendar and Instagram, plus doing so well at my Stafford photographic club. This image was one experiment on my phone. A setup on the table with LED light with good background. I used food coloring in milk and the strawberry making a fine mess…'
Instagram: @jonesey_adventures

It's good to share



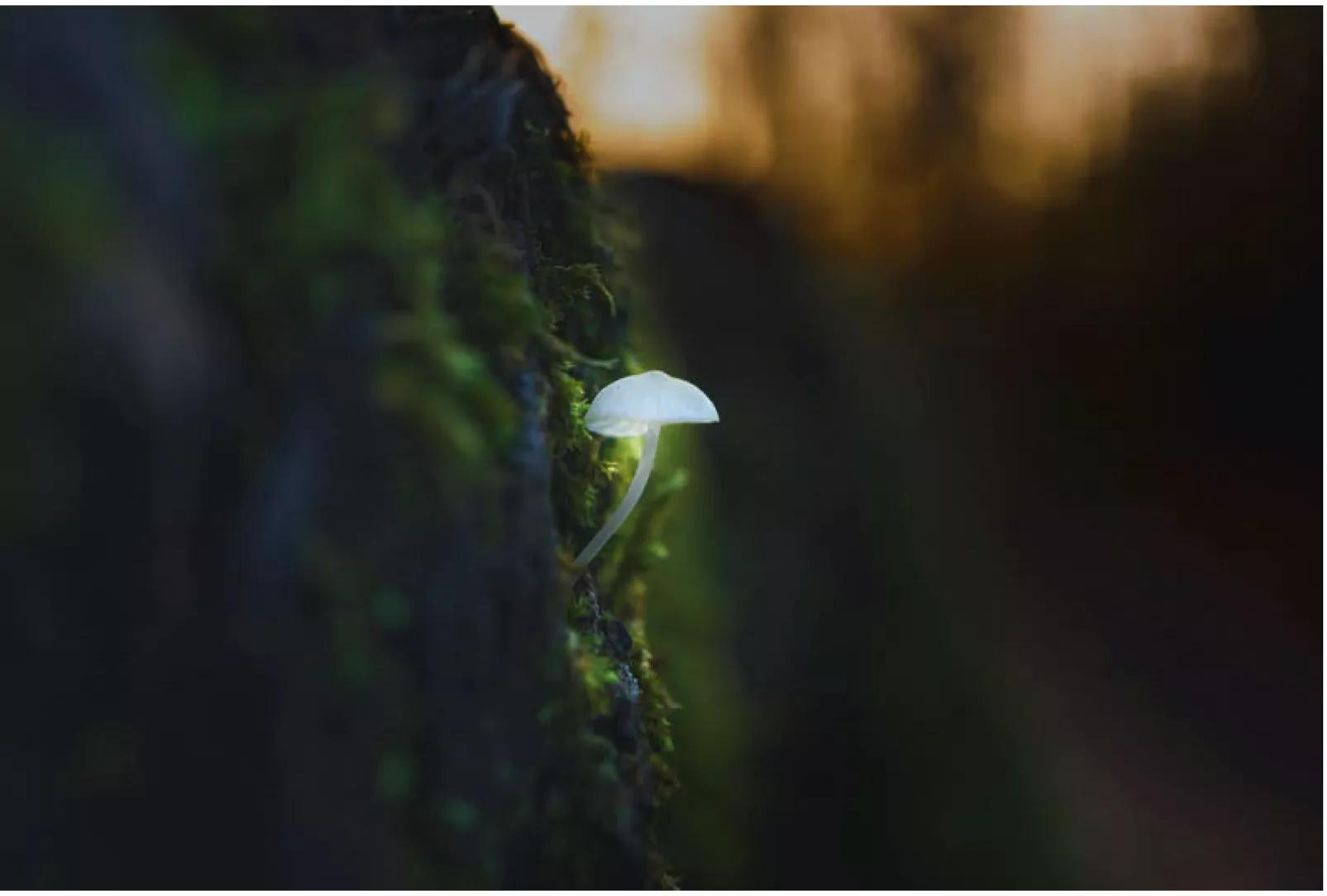
Let's be Owlsome!

by Marielle Tunderman

Nikon Z6III, Nikon 180-600mm lens at 600mm, 1/800sec at f/6.3, ISO 1250

'This was my first encounter with an owl in the wild and I am over the moon with this result. The owl just sat there peacefully and sleepy and wasn't bothered by my curiosity at all. A moment to remember and I love to share.'
Instagram: @Tunderwomann

We also liked...



A tiny lamp in the autumn woods

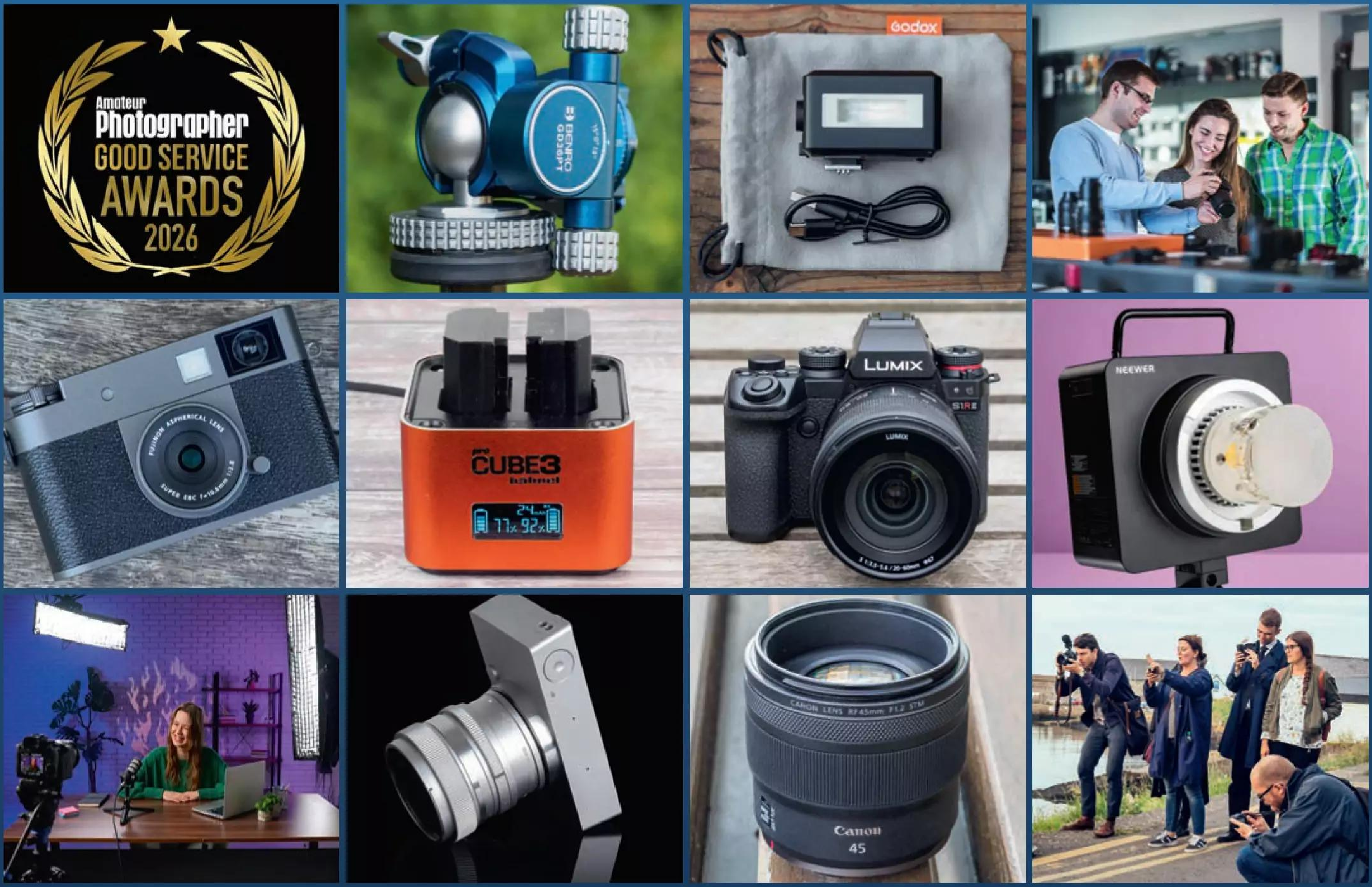
by Sreeja Kanumilli

Sony A6400, Sony 30mm macro lens, 1/200sec at f/3.5, ISO 320

'This shot was taken in Girton Woods in Cambridge on my afternoon walk. I really liked how this tiny mushroom stood away from the tree, and with the background light made a perfect composition. To me macro photography is all about details and I was aiming to capture the details of this 1cm-long mushroom with the background light bokeh. The light in the woods was not sufficient, and the mushroom stood in a odd height, not enough for the tripod, so I quickly changed to shutter priority mode and used the inbuilt flash to reduce the ISO noise.'
Instagram @silentphotographer22

Want to see your pictures here? Simply share them with our Instagram or Facebook communities using the hashtag **#appicoftheweek**. Or you can email your best shot to us at **ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk**. See page 3 for how to find us.

Cast your vote in the Amateur Photographer Readers’ Choice Awards!



The Amateur Photographer Readers’ Choice Awards are here! Have you been really impressed by a new camera, lens or accessory in the past 12 months? Or a camera retailer, exhibition, book or photography vlogger? Now’s your chance to share your love via this easy online form.

The deadline for voting is 11:59pm GMT on 31st December 2025. The winners of this public vote will be honoured at our glittering awards ceremony in London on Thursday, 26th February 2026.

Have your say on the following AP Readers’ Choice Awards:

- Good Service Awards (Your favourite retailer or service provider)
- Camera of the Year
- Lens of the Year
- Accessory of the Year
- Photo Community of the Year
- Content Creator of the Year
- Photography Event/Workshop Provider

Which camera has most impressed you this year? Have you bought and used a new lens, or a game-changing accessory this year, and want to let others know how good it is?

Have you attended a great photography event in 2025? Tell us about it. Which YouTubers and content creators have inspired and entertained you the most? Finally, are you part of a photography community that has helped, encouraged and inspired you? Show your support for them with a vote in our awards.

Simply point your phone’s camera at this QR code to vote, or visit: bit.ly/apreaderchoice

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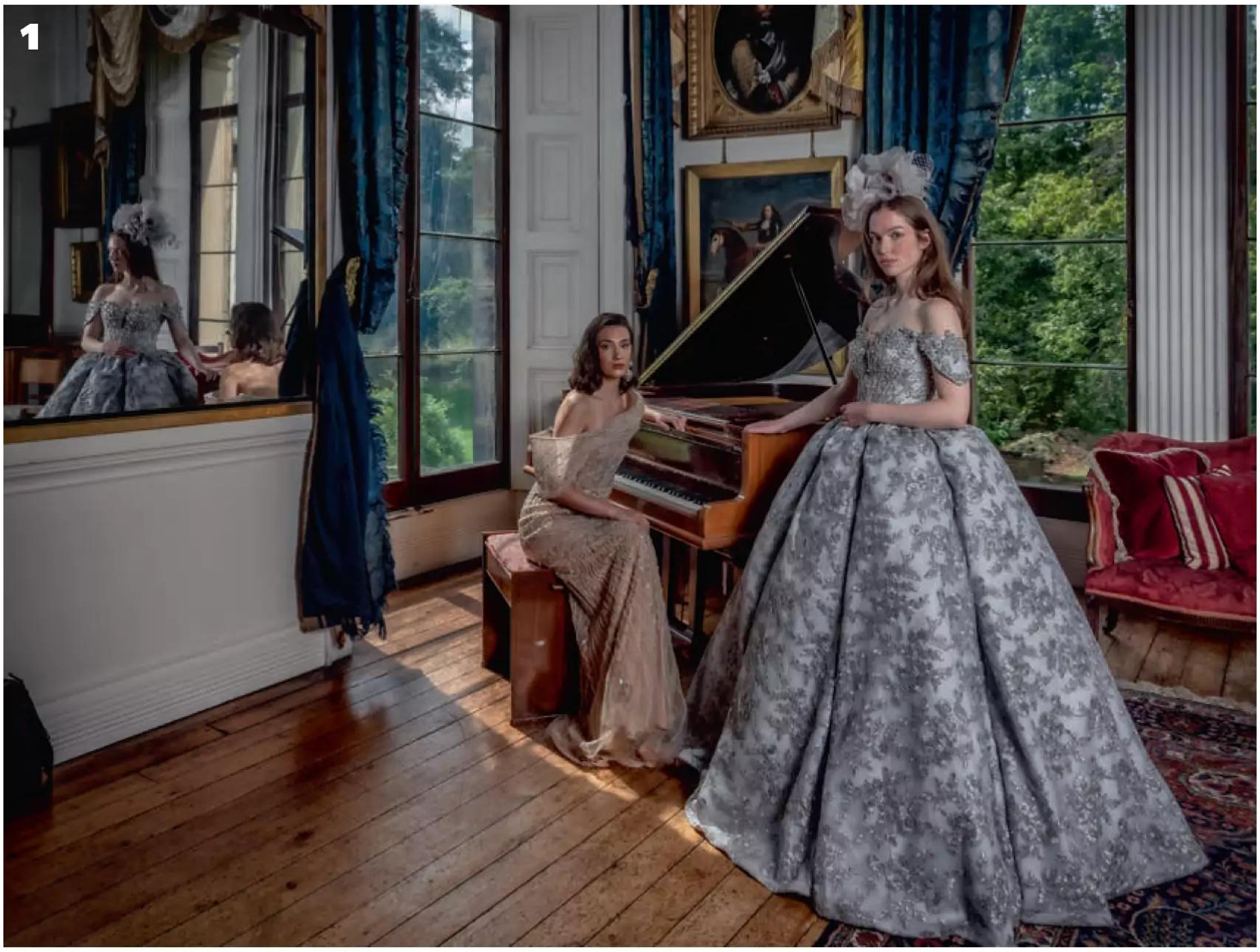
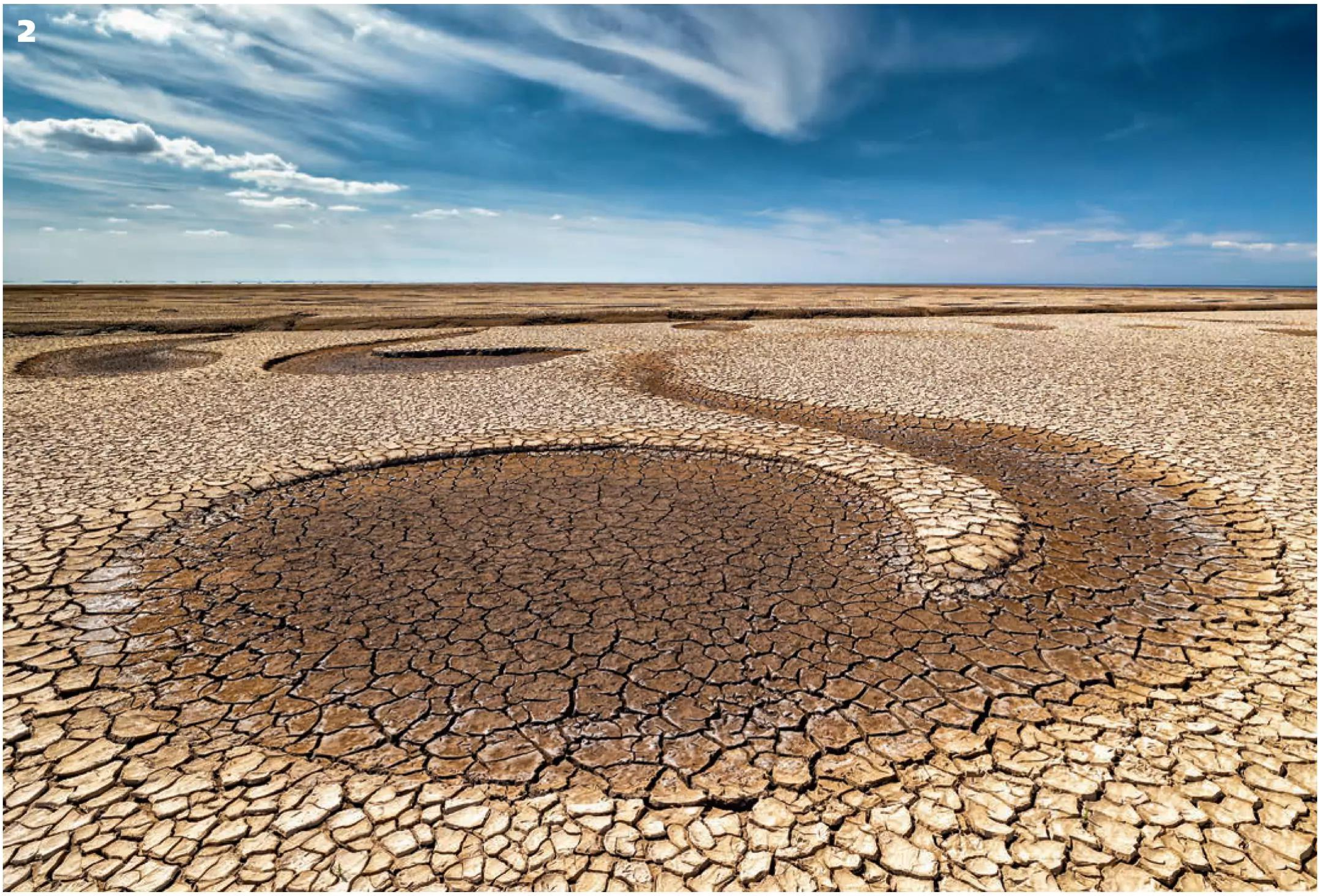


1 Ladies in Crinoline by Colin Mill

2 Mud Flats by Simon Raynor

3 Brown Bear by Angela McLean

2



3

Join the Club

Following some confusion with its name, Milton Keynes City PS was established in the 1980s

When was the club founded?
The club was originally called New City PS and was founded by a small group of enthusiasts at Stantonbury Campus in 1982. We couldn't use the name Milton Keynes in our name as there was already a camera club using it. However, during the 1990s, Central Milton Keynes Camera Club folded due to a lack of members and were incorporated into New City PS. Following years of confusion about exactly where New City PS represented, we changed our name to Milton Keynes City PS, just as the Queen granted Milton Keynes city status.

What does your club offer to new members?
The club is founded upon the principle of enthusiasts and experts sharing their collective experiences for the betterment of each other's craft. We have club members with experience in many genres of photography and with vast expertise in the technical and creative aspects of photography who are willing to share.

Members are encouraged to get involved with a programme that is designed to give all members opportunities to contribute, with members' evenings and practical sessions in particular which allows members to learn, do and share.

Describe a typical club meeting
We meet every Thursday from 7.30pm for that thoroughly British tradition of tea and a chat, with the meeting aiming to start at 7.45pm. No meeting would be complete without a half-time tea break, and then activities wrap up around 10pm. Our programme is a varied mix of speakers, competitions and practical evenings.

Do you invite guest speakers?
Yes, our programme is a varied mix of lectures and presentations by popular photographic speakers through to competition nights and practical evenings with a programme of outdoor meetings during June and July.

Do members compete in regional or national competitions?
Entering competitions isn't compulsory but those who do are encouraged to also enter any external competitions organised by the CACC or PAGB. We have a dedicated external competitions secretary to organise that for us.

We also have a few members who participate in the national BPE and international FIAP exhibitions. In addition to these external competitions, and exhibitions, members are also encouraged to attain PAGB or RPS distinctions.

How many members do you have?
Following Covid our membership dropped off, as it did for many clubs. It currently stands at 36.

Are any residential trips or outings planned?
Several members organise occasional day trips out but the club itself doesn't organise outings as our insurance doesn't cover that.

What are the club's goals for the future?
To increase membership to then allow for a more diverse programme, and so to survive! AP

Club essentials

Milton Keynes City Photographic Society

Christ Church Hall,
Stantonbury Campus,
Milton Keynes, MK14 6BN

Meets: 7:30pm Thursdays from September through to end of July

Membership: £62 per year or £5.50 per month. Joint, £93 per year or £8.25 per month. Student, £37 per year. Visitors, £5 (inclusive of refreshments) per visit, refundable if membership is taken up

Contact: Stuart Peaker (current chair) newcityps+chair@gmail.com

Website: mkcityps.co.uk

4 Droplets and Wishes by Diane Langford

6 Good old Days by Dave Ward

9 Eye Contact by Alisdair Mclean

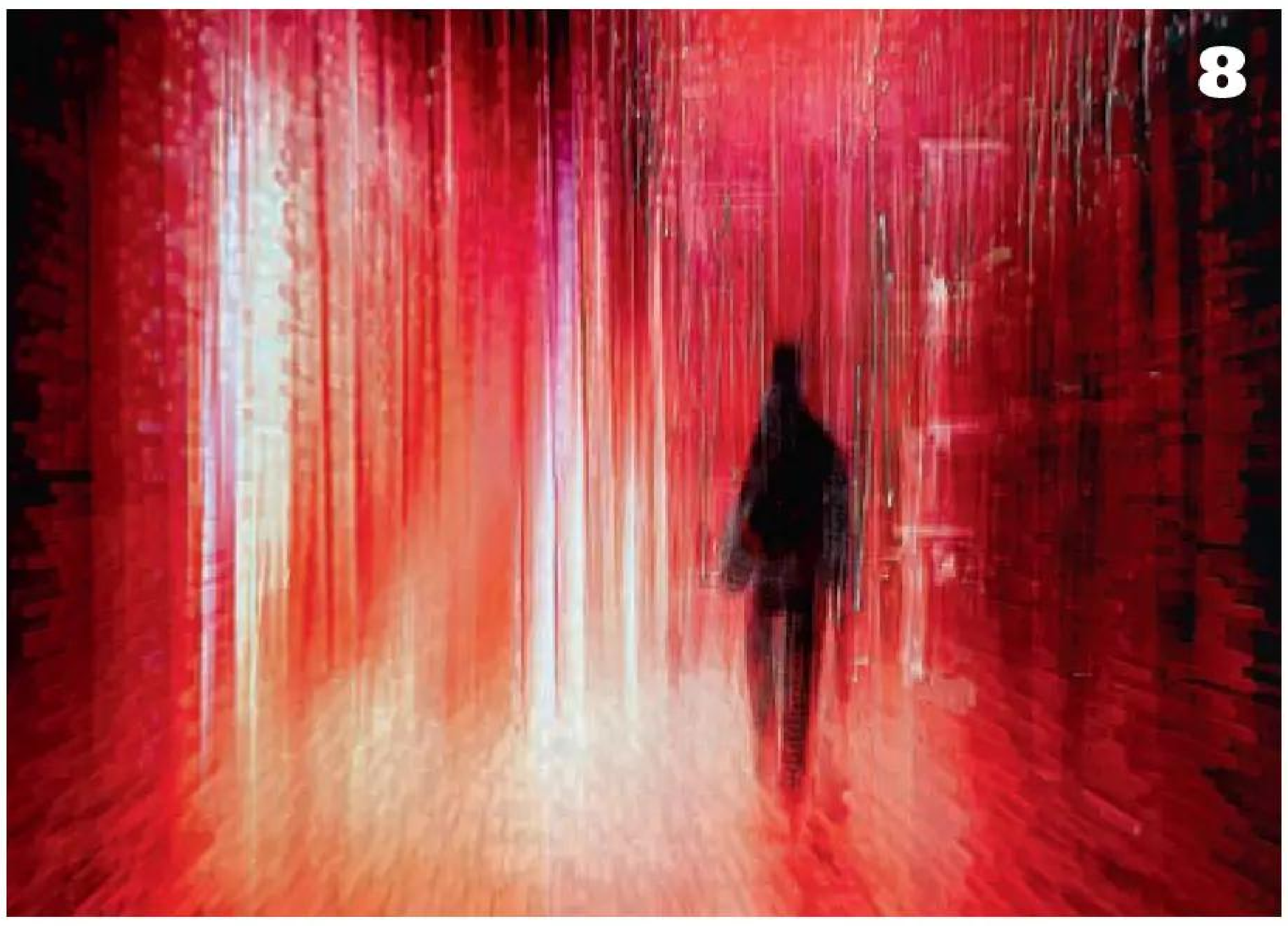
10 Style by Simon Raynor

5 Boats at Moreston Quay by Alison Millard

7 Winter Sunrise by Peter Westacott

8 Into Red by Keith Millard

11 Pinstripe Drop by Jamie White



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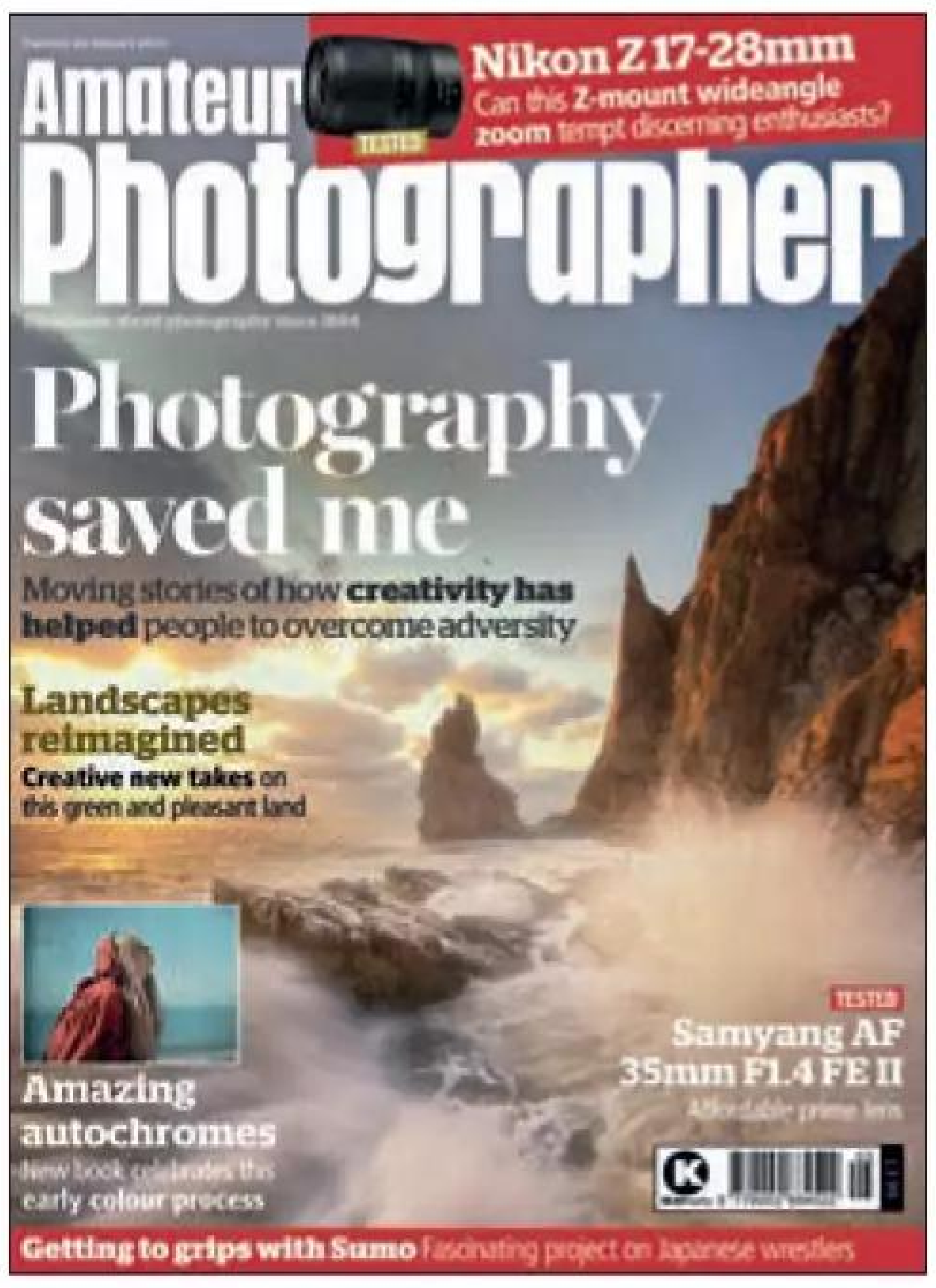

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london camera exchange

A round-up of the AP testing team's favourite and most highly rated kit, including both cameras and all kinds of accessories, across a wide range of price points

OM System Tough TG-7

● £499 ● explore.omsystem.com

This latest model in a long line of class-leading rugged cameras is waterproof to 15m, shockproof against a 2.1m drop, crushproof and freezeproof. The 25-100mm equivalent lens is paired with a 12MP sensor, with in-body stabilisation to combat shake. Viewing is via a 3in LCD. The TG-7 is also one of the few cameras of its type that can record raw files.

★★★★☆ **Reviewed 2 Apr 2024**

Canon PowerShot G7 X Mark III

● £699 ● www.canon.co.uk

This lovely little pocket camera provides a good range of features for both photography and video. You get a 20MP 1in sensor, 24-100mm equivalent f/1.8-2.8 zoom lens, 4K 30p video recording, and a tilting rear screen. It's ideal for those who'd like more advanced controls than on a smartphone.

★★★★☆ **Reviewed 28 Sep 2019**

Fujifilm X100VI

● £1,599 ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

The sixth version of Fujifilm's charismatic rangefinder-styled compact boasts a 40MP APS-C sensor in front of its fixed 23mm f/2 lens. It also gains in-body stabilisation while barely increasing in size. Traditional analogue control dials are joined by a unique hybrid optical / electronic viewfinder and a tilting touchscreen on the back. It's a truly fabulous camera.

★★★★★

Review
9 Apr 2024

Ricoh GR III

● £949 ● ricohgr.eu/en-gb

A favourite of street photographers, the GR III combines a 24MP APS-C sensor and a sharp 28mm equivalent f/2.8 lens in a slim, pocketable body. It offers sensitivities up to ISO 102,400 and 4fps shooting, while in-body image stabilisation helps keeps image sharp. Viewing is via a fixed 3in rear LCD or an optional optical viewfinder that slots onto the hot shoe.

★★★★☆

Reviewed
3 Aug
2019

Sony RX100 VII

● £1,049 ● www.sony.co.uk

Sony has somehow crammed a 24-200mm equivalent zoom, pop-up electronic viewfinder, tilting screen, 20fps shooting and 4K video recording into a body that you can slip into a jacket pocket. With the firm's latest AF technology also on board, it's without doubt the most accomplished pocket camera on the market.

★★★★⯪

Reviewed
5 Oct 2019

Sony RX10 IV

● £1,499 ● www.sony.co.uk

This sets a new standard for superzoom cameras, with a 24-600mm equivalent lens, 20MP 1in sensor, and 24fps continuous shooting. Its SLR-shaped body hosts a large electronic viewfinder and a decent set of physical controls. It's the best all-in-one camera for wildlife or travel photography that you can buy right now.

★★★★★

Reviewed
2 Dec 2017

BEST BUYS REVISITING GREAT KIT FROM OUR TEST ARCHIVES

Canon EOS 250D

- £769 with 18-55mm IS lens • www.canon.co.uk

One of the smallest DSLRs around, the EOS 250D strikes a great balance between portability and usability. It's equipped with a novice-friendly Guided Mode, while Canon's Dual Pixel CMOS sensor provides excellent autofocus in live view. Image quality is very good, delivering vibrant colours and plenty of fine detail.

Canon
EOS 250D

★★★★☆

Reviewed
7 Sep 2019

Olympus OM-D E-M10 Mark IV

- £749 with 14-42mm lens • www.olympus.co.uk

With a charismatic retro design, fine handling, highly effective in-body stabilisation and attractive JPEG output, Olympus has made a camera that's more pleasant to use than its entry-level competitors. Its 20MP sensor delivers good results up to ISO 3200 at least, and its tilting screen can be set to face forwards beneath the camera.

OLYMPUS
OM-D
IV

★★★★½

Reviewed
26 Sep 2020

Fujifilm X-T5

- £1,699 body only • www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Fujifilm's latest X-T model is a great choice for serious enthusiast photographers. It boasts a 40MP APS-C sensor housed in a retro-styled body covered with traditional analogue control dials. Subject-detection autofocus, in-body stabilisation and Fujifilm's lovely colour modes round off an extremely desirable package.

FUJIFILM
X-T5

★★★★★

Reviewed
3 Jan 2023

Canon EOS R50

- £899 with 15-45mm lens • www.canon.co.uk

With the EOS R50, Canon has fitted some impressive technology into a compact and lightweight body. It boasts highly capable subject recognition autofocus coupled with rapid continuous shooting. Image quality is very pleasing too, with attractive files direct from the camera. It also works well with EF-mount DSLR lenses.

★★★★☆

Reviewed
6 Jun 2023

Fujifilm X-T50

- £1,299 body only • www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Fujifilm's mid-range line takes a major step up, with a 40MP sensor and in-body image stabilisation. Traditional analogue dials control exposure settings, while the firm's peerless Film Simulation colour modes get their own selection dial for the first time. The compact body is ideal for travel.

FUJIFILM
X-T50

★★★★★

Reviewed
30 Jul 2024

Panasonic Lumix GH7

- £1,999 body only • www.panasonic.com/uk

Panasonic's flagship Micro Four Thirds camera is aimed at videographers, but holds its own when capturing stills as well. Its 25MP sensor delivers plenty of detail, while enabling 5.7K recording at 60fps, or 4K at 120fps. Autofocus is much improved over the firm's older models, too. Pro-spec video functionality and effective in-body stabilisation round off a fine package.

★★★★★

Reviewed
5 Nov 2024

Fujifilm X-S10

- £999 with 15-45mm lens • www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Fujifilm's X-S10 brings a distinct change in design. It looks much like a conventional DSLR, with electronic dials for changing exposure settings. But you still get Fujifilm's signature fine image quality, along with in-body image stabilisation. The result is a camera that's perfect for APS-C DSLR users looking to upgrade to mirrorless.

FUJIFILM
X-S10

★★★★★

Reviewed
23 Jan 2021

OM System OM-5

- £1,199 body only • explore.omsystem.com

This small, fully featured and weather-sealed mirrorless camera is both a pleasure to use, and capable of great results. Its petite body finds space for an extensive complement of controls, along with class-leading 5-axis in-body image stabilisation, yet weighs in at just 414g. On-chip phase detection enables fast, decisive autofocus.

OM SYSTEM
OM-5

★★★★★

Reviewed
13 Dec 2022

OM System OM-1 Mark II

- £2,199 body only • explore.omsystem.com

Updated version of this high-speed powerhouse gains some handy new features. It's capable of shooting at 120fps with focus fixed, or 50fps with AF, but now with double the buffer for extended bursts. AI subject detection recognises vehicles, animals and birds. It also boasts IP53-rated weather-sealing and includes class-leading stabilisation.

OM SYSTEM
OM-1
II

★★★★★

Review
12 Mar 2024

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London Camera Exchange
PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 26

Nikon Zf

● £2,149 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

This lovely-looking full-frame mirrorless model combines plenty of substance with its classic retro styling. It boasts tactile top-plate dials for shutter speed, ISO and exposure compensation while delivering lovely image quality in both JPEG and raw. There's some cutting-edge technology on board too, including impressive subject detection autofocus.

★★★★½

Reviewed
9 Jan 2024

Sony Alpha 7 IV

● £2,179 body only ● www.sony.co.uk

Sony's enthusiast-focused full-frame mirrorless model sets a new standard in its class. Its 33MP full-frame sensor delivers excellent image quality, and it can shoot at up to 10fps. Its practically foolproof subject-detection AF can now recognise birds as well as humans and animals. A large, clear viewfinder and fully articulated touchscreen round off the package.

★★★★★

Reviewed
11 Dec 2021

Nikon D850

● £2,699 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

This brilliant professional all-rounder provides a winning combination of high resolution and speed. Its 45.7MP sensor produces fine results at high ISOs, and the autofocus is incredibly responsive and accurate. Build quality and handling should satisfy the most demanding of users. It's an absolutely sensational camera capable of tackling any type of subject.

★★★★★

Reviewed
21 Oct 2017

Nikon Z7II

● £2,899 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

Nikon has delivered a sensible update to its flagship high-res model, with an additional SD card slot and slightly faster shooting. As before, its 45.7MP sensor gives stunning image quality, backed up by 5-axis in-body image stabilisation and fast, accurate autofocus. The viewfinder is superb, and F-mount SLR lenses can be used via the FTZ adapter.

★★★★½

Reviewed
6 Feb 2021

Nikon Z8

● £3,789 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

This stunning camera takes all the best bits of Nikon's flagship Z9 and places them in a smaller, less-expensive body. Combining high resolution, rapid speed, cutting-edge autofocus and pro-level build, it's capable of shooting 45.7MP raw files at 20fps. It can also record 8K video. With its superb viewfinder and tilting rear screen, it's a stunningly capable camera.

★★★★★

Reviewed
11 Jul 2023

Canon EOS R6 Mark II

● £2,779 body only ● www.canon.co.uk

Based around a 24MP full-frame sensor, this brilliant all-rounder will do almost anything you might ask it to. It combines reliable subject-detection AF, rapid continuous shooting, and effective image stabilisation in a body that handles well and gives great results. It also works well with adapted EF-mount DSLR lenses.

★★★★★

Reviewed
21 Mar 2023

Sony Alpha 7R V

● £3,699 body only ● www.sony.co.uk

With its 61MP full-frame sensor, the A7R V provides class-leading image quality while adding a whole array of improvements over its predecessor. These include subject-detection AF, a larger, more detailed viewfinder, and a more flexible rear LCD design. For those whose needs are more about image quality than speed, it's probably the best full-frame camera you can buy.

★★★★★

Reviewed
17 Jan 2023

Leica M11

● £7,299 body only ● uk.leica-camera.com

Leica's 60MP full-frame rangefinder is a beautiful anachronism – a camera type that has been obsolete for decades, yet which still remains an object of desire for many photographers. This elegant mix of the old and the modern offers triple-resolution raw recording, including 36MP and 18MP options, and vastly improved battery life. It's a really lovely camera that can deliver stunning results.

★★★★½

Reviewed
8 Mar 2022

Fujifilm GFX100S

● £5,499 body only ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Fujifilm's second-generation super-high resolution camera places a 102MP medium-format sensor in a body the size of a full-frame DSLR. On-chip phase detection provides rapid autofocus while in-body stabilisation allows the camera to be used handheld easily. It's perfect if you need to shoot in the field with compromising image quality.

★★★★★

Reviewed
8 May 2021

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Billingham Hadley Pro 2020

● £293 ● www.billingham.co.uk

The latest model in this iconic line of British-made satchel-style bags includes some well-considered updates, such as a detachable shoulder strap. It's impeccably constructed from premium materials to keep your kit protected, including Billingham's signature triple-layer canvas that's impermeable to water. It's pricey, but will last for decades.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 5 Oct 2019**

Vanguard Veo Active 42M

● £160 ● www.vanguardworld.co.uk

Vanguards's VEO Active backpacks are designed for hiking. This model is small enough to carry on a plane, but still has space for a camera and three lenses, plus a 13in laptop and personal items. It offers excellent protection thanks to its metal frame and padded insert.

★★★★★

Reviewed 19 Jul 2022

Gitzo Adventury 30L

● £239 ● www.gitzo.com/uk-en

This sizeable backpack will hold a pro-spec DSLR with a 70-200mm lens attached and a second body plus up to 4 lenses. An expandable roll top provides plenty of space for personal items, and the bag also boasts tablet and laptop compartments. It's comfortable to carry fully loaded and offers first-class protection.

★★★★★

Reviewed 8 Sep 2018

Essential Film Holder Kit

● £90 ● www.clifforth.co.uk

Many photographers either still enjoy shooting film, or have old negatives and slides that they'd like to digitise. Probably the best way to do this is to copy them using a DSLR or mirrorless camera. This easy-to-use device holds film flat over a lightbox for copying. It gives excellent results and is much quicker than using a scanner. ★★★★★

Reviewed 29 Aug 2020

NiSi Bluetooth Remote Control

● £29.90 ● nisioptics.co.uk

If you use strong neutral density filters, this device makes it much easier to work with the long exposures required. It connects to your smartphone by Bluetooth and is controlled by NiSi's free ND Calculator app. Camera connection cables cost £5.90 each.

★★★★½ **Reviewed 11 Jan 2022**

Novo Mantis T3 Mini Travel Tripod

● £70 ● www.ukdigital.co.uk

This neat 27cm-tall mini tripod has two-section carbon-fibre legs that can be set to three different angles, and chunky rubber feet that unscrew to reveal ground spikes. The matched MBH-25 ball head (£60) provides impressive strength, and an optional centre column is available for £30.

★★★★★

Reviewed 6 Feb 2021

Manfrotto 190 Go! MT190GOC4

● £299 ● www.manfrotto.com/uk-en

With 4-section carbon fibre legs that can each be set to four angles, this sturdy, versatile tripod achieves a maximum height of 147cm while folding down to 45cm, and weighs 1.35kg. But its party trick is a centre column that can be set horizontally for overhead or low-level shooting.

★★★★★

Reviewed 1 Jun 2019

Benro GD3WH

● £169 ● www.benroeu.com

This relatively lightweight and portable geared head employs an Arca Swiss type quick release. Three large control knobs, one for each axis of movement, drive the camera directly in the corresponding direction, allowing highly accurate setting of composition. With its sturdy magnesium alloy construction, it's rated to support a 6kg load.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 26 May 2018**

Vanguard VEO 2S AM-264TR

● £99 ● www.vanguardworld.co.uk

This unusual monopod boasts an extended height of 1630mm, a folded height of 565mm and a maximum load capacity of 6kg. Three foldable legs at the base provide a tri-stand platform, and are linked to the four-section carbon fibre leg via a ball joint that allows smooth panning and tilting motions.

★★★★★

Reviewed 30 May 2015

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London Camera Exchange
PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 26

Adaptalux Studio Nature LED Macro Combo Pack

● £372 ● www.adaptalux.com

This clever modular LED system is perfect for lighting small subjects creatively. The pack includes a control pod with a built-in rechargeable battery, four flexible lighting arms (two white, one blue and one green), plus three diffusers and two colour filters. Always-on LED lighting makes it easy to visualise the results in real time.

★★★★★

Reviewed 20 Sep 2022

RØDE VideoMicro II

● £82 ● en.rode.com

RØDE's updated compact on-camera video microphone brings a number of welcome improvements. Along with a much-improved Helix shock-mount, it comes with cables for use with both cameras and smartphones, plus a choice of foam or furry windshields. Audio quality is a dramatic improvement over most cameras' built-in mics, too.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 20 Jun 2023**

Tenba Tools Cable Duo 4

● £20 ● uk.tenba.com

Not all handy accessories have to cost a fortune. This well-designed tech organiser pouch features a dual-compartment layout, with a shallow space on one side for cables, and a deeper one on the other for such things as battery chargers or computer mice. The simple rectangular design fits easily into a bag and the tough transparent covers make it easy to see what's inside.

★★★★★

Reviewed 20 Sep 2022

Formatt Hitech Onyx 85mm Seascape Kit

● £345 ● www.formatt-hitech.com

This 85mm filter kit is ideal for APS-C or Micro Four Thirds users. It includes a polariser, 6-stop neutral density, and 3-stop soft-edge and hard-edge ND grads. It'll fit filter threads up to 77mm, with step rings for 72mm, 67mm and 58mm supplied in the box.

Seascape Kit By Formatt Hitech
FORMATT HITECH

★★★★½

Reviewed 6 Feb 2021

Calibrite ColorChecker Studio

● £500 ● www.colourconfidence.com

Previously known as X-Rite i1 Studio, this kit enables users to adopt a completely colour-managed workflow, from capture through display to print. It allows profiling of cameras, scanners, monitors, projectors and printers, and works with both Mac and Windows computers. It's a great tool for any photographer who likes to print at home.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 19 Jan 2019**

calibrite
colorchecker studio

Kase Revolution Magnetic Circular Entry Level Kit

● £230-£285 ● www.kasefilters.com

These clever kits include circular polarising, 3-stop and 6-stop neutral density filters that snap magnetically onto adapters that screw into your lens. This considerably speeds up the process of using filters and encourages you to use them creatively. Kits are available in 77mm, 82mm, and 95mm sizes, with adapter rings from 49mm up.

★★★★★

Reviewed 21 Feb 2023

Epson Expression Photo XP970

● £219 ● www.epson.co.uk

An update to the XP960, which won our coveted gold award, this impressive multifunctional unit provides A3 printing ability while retaining a compact footprint. Along with a conventional USB connection, it can print over Wi-Fi, or directly from an SD card or USB stick, controlled using the excellent colour LCD touchscreen. Other useful features include an A4 scanner and double-sided document printing.

★★★★★

Biolite Charge 80 PD

● £70 ● uk.bioliteenergy.com

Powerbanks can be invaluable when you want to keep shooting for longer. This device houses a 20,000mAh Li-ion battery, which is capable of replenishing the average camera battery up to ten times. It can also be used to power certain cameras directly.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 10 Jul 2021**

Fujifilm Instax Mini Link 2

● £115 ● www.instax.co.uk

Powered by a built-in rechargeable battery, this smart little printer connects to your smartphone via Bluetooth and is controlled using an attractively designed and intuitive app. It's small enough to slip into a coat pocket or bag, and delivers gorgeous little prints with fine detail and vivid colour.

★★★★★

Reviewed 30 Aug 2022

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★★★★★

"Never seen a camera shop with so many varieties of camera from film to digital, clearly shows a lot of passion and hard work!"
★★★★★

"Very informative the guys really know their stuff. Nothing was too much trouble."
★★★★★

"Quick delivery and great products!"
★★★★★

"Great service as always. My go-to store for all my camera needs."
★★★★★

"Really helpful staff and a fantastic selection of kit. Definitely going back. Still smiling."
★★★★★

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"This is how internet shopping should be!"
★★★★★

"Great customer service, and would recommend to anyone, thank you guys"
★★★★★

"Highly recommend popping in if you need anything camera related, old or new."
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★★★★★

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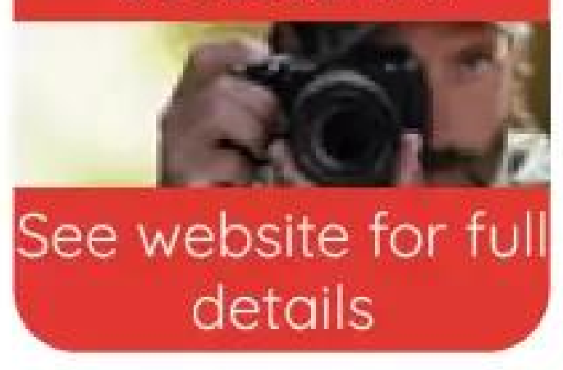

See website for full details

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Was £2,269
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OM SYSTEM 50-200MM

f/2.8 IS PRO

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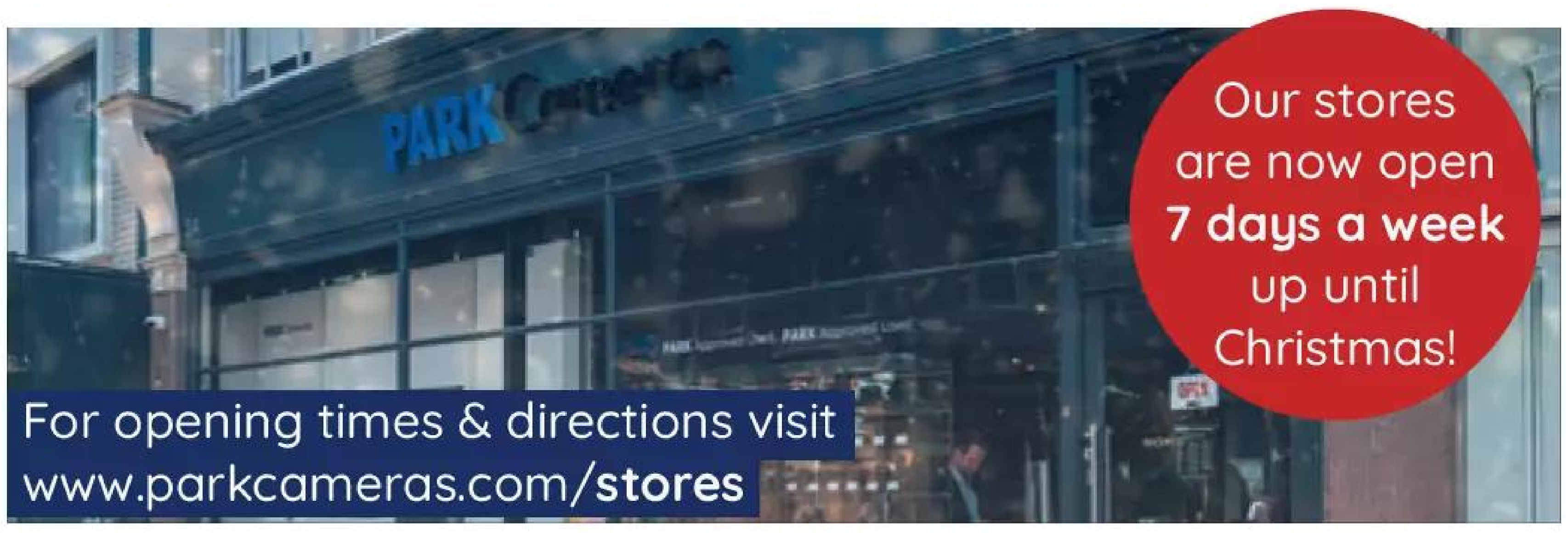

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RF 15-35 F2.8 L IS USM box	£1399
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RF 24-70 F2.8 IS USM box	£1699
RF 24-105 F4 L IS	£899
RF 35 F1.8 IS macro	£399
RF 50 F1.2 L USM box	£1299
RF 70-200 F2.8 L IS USM box	£1699
RF 70-200 F4 L IS USM	£1299
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17-40 F4 L USM	£199
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18-135 F3.5/5.6 IS EFS nano	£299
18-200 F3.5/5.6 IS EFS	£249
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24 F2.8 IS USM	£349
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24-70 F2.8 USM LII box	£999
24-70 F4 IS USM L	£599
24-105 F4 IS USM L	£399
35 F1.4 USM LII box	£899
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100 F2.8 IS USM L macro	£699
100 F2.8 USM macro	£299
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300 F2.8 IS USM LII	£3499
300 F4 IS USM L	£599
400 F4 DO IS II USM	£3699
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10-20 F3.5 EX DC HSM	£229
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18-300 F3.5/6.3 DC OS box	£299
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105 F2.8 EX DG HSM OS	£299
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18-400 F3.5/6.3 DiII VC	£549
90 F2.8 Di	£199

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28-400mm F4/8 S VR
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Used Nikon

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Used Nikon

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£999

D500 body
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180-600 F5.6/6.3 VR box	£1499
800 F6.3 VR S box	£4399
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18-35 F3.5/4.5 AFS	£299
18-105 F3.5/5.6 VR DX AFS	£199
18-140 F3.5/5.6 AFS VR	£199
18-200 F3.5/5.6 VR DX MKII	£299
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18-300 F3.5/6.3 VR DX	£449
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24 F2.8 AFD box	£249
24-70 F2.8 AFS VR box	£1199
24-70 F2.8 AFS box	£599
24-120 F4 AFS VR	£499
28-300 F3.5/5.6 AFS VR box	£599
35 F1.8 AFS DX	£149
35 F1.8 AFS ED	£299
35 F2.8 AFD	£299
50 F1.4 AFS G box	£249
50 F1.8 AFS box	£99
50 F1.8 AFD	£69
55-200 F4.5/5.6 AFS VR DX box	£99
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35 F2 XF WR	£299
50-140 F2.8 WR box	£799
50-230 F4.5/5.7 MKII	£239
55-200 F3.5/4.8 R box	£349
56 F1.2 R	£399
60 f2.4 R	£399
70-300 F4/5.6 R	£599
1.4x XF conv	£249
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14-150 F4/5.6 ED MKII	£349
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40-150 F2.8 Pro box	£899
40-150 F4 Pro box	£649
45 F1.2 Pro ED	£599
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100-400 F5/6.3 IS box	£699
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12-60 F2.8/4	£399
12-60 F3.5/5.6	£199
14 F2.5.	£149
14-42 F3.5/5.6	£99
14-140 F3.5/5.6	£299
25 F1.4 box	£399
45 F2.8	£399
45-175 F4.5/5.6	£299
45-200 F4.5/5.6 box	£179
100-300 F4/5.6 MKII	£429

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GT5541LS	£699
GT5543LS	£699
G2220 Explorer	£199
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40 F4 PE	£429
50 F2.8 E MC	£199
100 F4 PE macro	£299
100 F4 E macro	£199
135 F4 PE	£349
150 F3.5 PE	£299
150 F3.5 E.......£179 250 F5.6 E	£199
120 back RWC late	£99
135W back	£599
135N back	£249
Speed grip E...£99 WLF	£149
Sports finder	£299
AEIII prism	£349
AEII prism	£199
Rotary or plain prism E	£149
Macro bellows E	£149

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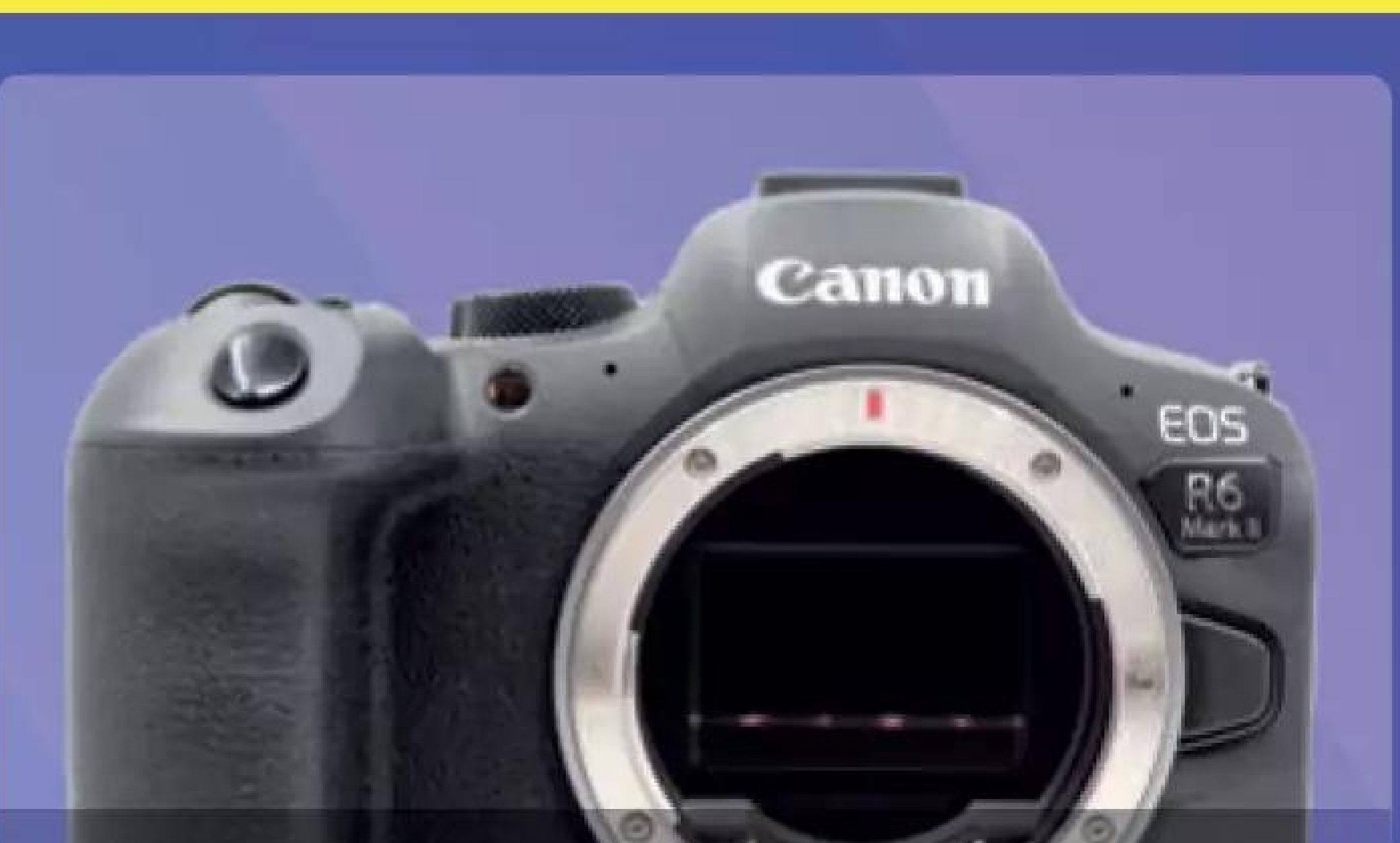

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Final Analysis

Paul Hill considers...

Untitled, Nottingham 1974 by Tom Sandberg

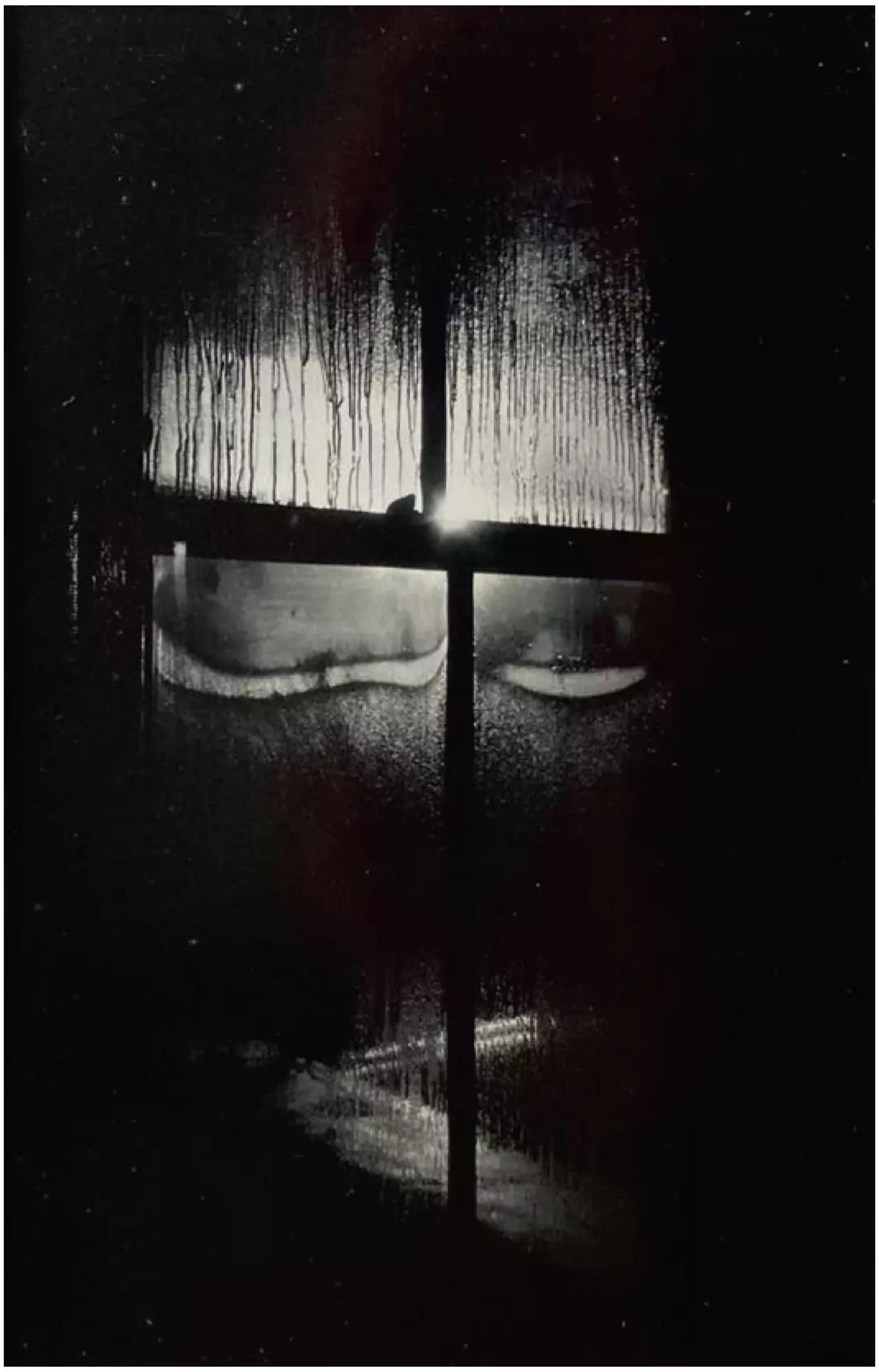

PHOTO BY TOM SANDBERG

When my late wife, Angela, and I started the first photography workshop in Britain in 1976 I asked one of my polytechnic students who lived nearby in Derbyshire if he would like to assist me. And when he heard the workshop was going to be headed up by his current hero, Ralph Gibson from New York, he was over the moon.

That former student was Tom Sandberg, who has become one of Norway's most significant and prolific art photographers. He is currently having his first major retrospective in his native country at the most prestigious gallery in Oslo – the Henie Onstad Kunstsenter (closes 1 March). This is really a big deal for any artist, but there was one person missing at the opening: Tom.

In 2014 he died of cancer, aged 60. Angela, who kept a maternal eye on young Tom, had died of cancer eight years earlier, aged 66.

Tom gave us this photograph of his bathroom window in 1974 when he was on the trendsetting Creative Photography course run by Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham and Derby College of Art.

Tom pointed his camera at anything and everything – a paper bag, condensation, clouds, shadows, puddles of water – and made those ordinary things into extraordinary photographs. His work is the best example for making photographs where you are rather than where you think – or the unimaginative tell you – you should be.

When I look at this photograph I think of Tom, of course, but I also feel a sense of loss; and that leads me to thinking about Angela and the life and family we shared. The image is melancholic. But out of the stygian gloom comes light – he was a magnificent photographer of light – as it peeps through the sash cord window and is reflected off the jewel-like streams of condensation. It was almost certainly a streetlight, but it could easily have been the early rays of the sun on a winter's morning heralding another day of possible adventures rather than the arrival of the Grim Reaper. The window could be a caricature of that feared mythical figure who serves to sever the ties between the soul and the body.

For me, it has become a memento mori. After he graduated, Tom ploughed a lonely furrow back home in Oslo. His determination to establish a 'new photography' there obsessed him and even his lapses into alcoholism could not diminish that ambition. His Trent Poly flatmate, Gerry Meaudre from France has produced a candid, insightful and touching film *The Dark Red Room* for the current exhibition about Tom's early years, working methods and later success. As students they were known as Tom and Gerry, and they remained close over the ensuing years.

Tom's father was a formidable and successful journalist in Oslo. He asked Tom when he left Derbyshire – as fathers tend to do – what sort of photography would he do?

'My own work.'

'But where's the cash, lad? Where's the cash?'

Tom had a huge and much lauded show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2007. As Gerry comments in the section of his film showing Tom sequencing his large, framed prints: 'Here's the work, dad. Here's the work.'

See more at www.hok.no/en/exhibitions/tom-sandberg; nilsstaerk.dk/artists/50-tom-sandberg-estate

Among many achievements, Paul Hill has written two books on photography, was director of the Creative Photography course at Trent Polytechnic and has been exhibited numerous times. He was the first photographer to receive an MBE for services to photography and the first professor of photographic practice in a British university. **hillonphotography.co.uk**.

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